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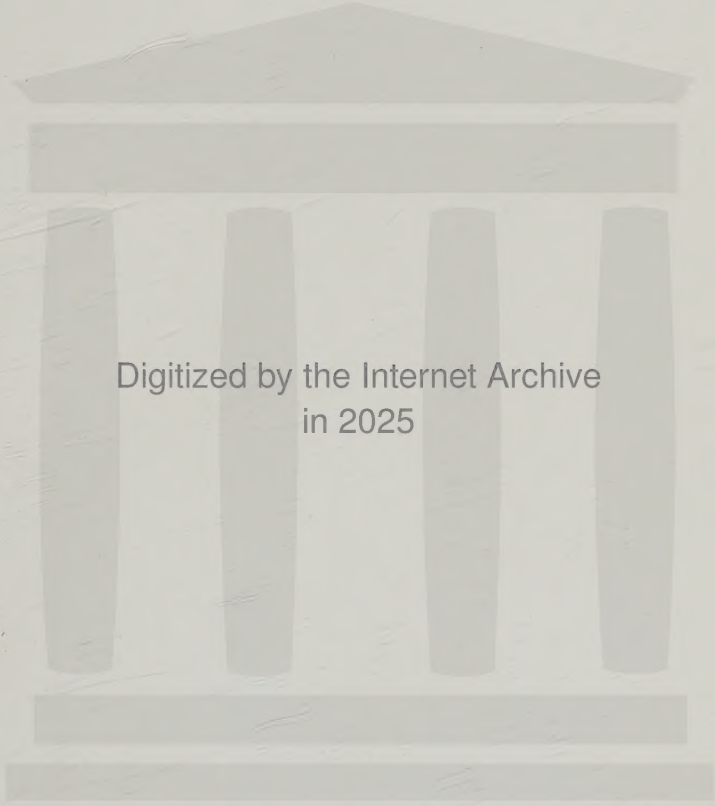
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RECORDS

OF

ROMSEY ABBEY:

AN ACCOUNT

OF

THE BENEDICTINE HOUSE OF NUNS,

WITH NOTES ON

THE PARISH CHURCH AND TOWN

(A.D. 907—1558).

Compiled from Manuscript and Printed Records

BY

HENRY G. D. LIVEING, M.A.

Vicar of Hyde, Winchester.

WINCHESTER:
WARREN AND SON, 85, HIGH STREET.

1906.

TO MY FRIENDS AT ROMSEY

WHO TREASURE THEIR GOODLY HERITAGE

THE ABBEY CHURCH.

KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE
WINCHESTER
942.
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PREFACE.

THE History of Romsey Abbey has never yet been written, and it is very unlikely that, owing to the loss or destruction of the Monastic Rolls and Register, such a work will ever be accomplished. The account of the Abbey and Town, contained in the following pages, has been compiled from notes, collected out of MSS. and printed books, and pieced together by the Author to the best of his ability. An intimate familiarity with the beautiful Church, acquired during a six years residence in the town from 1892–98, moved him to search for information about its past history, and led him to collect these notes. He is aware that the result must appear but fragmentary, and that an amateur, working in the field of history and archæology, is very liable to errors of all kinds, but he ventures to hope that, since there is no book of the kind at present in circulation, his account of the Abbey and Town may not be without interest to his old friends in Romsey and the neighbourhood, and perhaps also to some of the visitors who come to view the Church during the summer months.

The Author has to express his regret that owing to lack of space he has been compelled to omit several Appendices. The plan of the Conventual Buildings for

the same reason, and because of the lack of evidence for reconstructing it, has had to be omitted ; the matter is still under investigation, and therefore the notes with reference to the site either of the Abbess's Lodging or of the Guest House must be considered tentative.

The Author owes a large debt of gratitude to those who have generously assisted him in his undertaking, and has much pleasure in recording his thanks to the Rev. J. Cooke Yarborough, the Vicar of Romsey, for his kindness, shown in a variety of ways ; to the Right Hon. Evelyn Ashley for his very kind permission to reproduce the collection of old water-colour drawings at Broadlands ; to the Rev. Prebendary Coleman, of Wells, for his unfailing interest and encouragement ; to Charles Wooldridge, Esq., for his ready permission to examine the Episcopal Registers ; to the Rev. F. T. Madge for access to the Cathedral Library ; and to Ralph Nevill, Esq., for his help in several matters. He offers special thanks to the Rev. F. Hyne Davy for writing the chapter on the Romsey Psalter ; and to E. C. Shearman, Esq., for the beautiful drawing reproduced as a frontispiece.

He wishes to record his obligations to the British Museum Authorities for allowing him to photograph Mr. Latham's sketches ; to Mr. H. Guard, of Romsey, for most kindly taking a large number of photographs both at the British Museum and at Romsey ; to the Rev. C. Watling

for a photograph of the Le Rous tomb at Imber; to the Rev. M. West for a photograph of a page of the Psalter; to Messrs. Wilkinson & Co., of Trowbridge, for photographs of Edington Church; to Messrs. Dodridge & Gibbs, of Romsey, for permission to reproduce their beautiful photograph of the Saxon Rood; to N. C. Nisbett, Esq., for careful photographs of seals; to the latter and to the Hampshire Field Club for permission to reproduce a plan of the Church, attached to an article by the Vicar, entitled *Recent Discoveries in Romsey Abbey*; to Miss M. and Miss H. Lethbridge for their kindness in making the Index. He wishes to recognise the careful work done for him by Miss M. Martin at the Record Office and at Winchester, in copying MSS.

He cannot close these few words of preface without expressing his appreciation of the excellent work done by Messrs. Warren & Son in printing and producing the book, and of the care taken by their staff in passing these pages through the press.

ERRATA.

Page 5, line 30, *for* "Norman," *read* "E. English."
,, 5, ,, 34, *insert after* "house," "in the main."
,, 6, ,, 20, *omit* "which divides . . . . Romsey Extra."
,, 8, ,, 10, *for* "tenth," *read* "ninth."
,, 14, ,, 33, *for* "£1," *read* "£2."
,, 29, ,, 1, *for* "Æthælfleda," *read* "Æthelflæda."
,, 32, ,, 27, *for* "1357," *read* "1057."
,, 60, ,, 20, *for* "Formulari," *read* "Formulare."
,, 67, ,, 10, *for* "being found," *read* "is to be found."
,, 69, ,, 33, *for* "an," "window," *and* "was," *read* "two," "windows," *and* "were."
,, 94, ,, 20, *for* "his," *read* "his successor's."
,, 105, ,, 12, *for* "1310," *read* "1311."
,, 118, ,, 14, *for* "of," *read* "to."
,, 128, ,, 20, *for* "1372," *read* "1373."
,, 134, ,, 8, *for* "a year," *read* "a month, 1358."
,, 169, ,, 4, *for* "1368," *read* "1369."
,, 176, ,, 5, *for* "hundred," *read* "Hundred.'
,, 185, ,, 24, *for* "and," *read* "and makes."
,, 196, ,, 15, *for* "and," *read* "or."
,, 206, ,, 31, *for* "and," *read* "which."
,, 231, ,, 25, *for* "offend," *read* "offends."
,, 235, ,, 9, *for* "and," *read* "the chanter."
,, 236, ,, 28, *for* "Almoness," *read* "Almoneress."
,, 281, ,, 10, *for* "inspection," *read* "collection."

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B. ROMSEY NOTES FROM DOMESDAY.

C. MR. JOHN LATHAM AND HIS COLLECTIONS.

NOTES.

1. The Abbey was a Royal Foundation.
2. It was dedicated in honour of S. Mary and S. Æthelflæda.
3. The names of thirty-three Abbesses are known.
4. The Convent existed for c. 632 years.
5. It held property in four Counties.
6. It was a home of learning in early days.
7. It fell into disrepute about the close of the 15th century.
8. The Suppression took place in the Spring of 1539.

Dates are given according to modern reckoning. The sign [⊕] is used to indicate the day or year of death.

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LIST OF ABBESSES

Abbess
- 907 Ælflæda. ⊕ 959 (?).
- 966 S. Merwinna.
- *c.* 999 Elwina.[1]
- *c.* 1003 S. Æthelflæda.[1]
- *c.* 1016 Wulfynn.

A. D.	Date	Abbess [Bishop]	Prebendary of Edington
1199	3 June	Matilda Patriz, soror of Walter Walerand. ⊕28 Oct. 1218–27 Oct. 1219	
1219	... .	Matilda [unnamed]; ⊕ Dec. 1230	
1230–1	14 Dec.–19 Jan. ...	Matilda de Barbfle; ⊕ 14 Apr. 1237	
1237	28 Apr.–15 May ...	Isabella de Nevill	
1238	... ...	Cecilia	
c. 1240	... ...	... ...	John de Romesia ...
1247	6–26 Sept.	Constancia, late Prioress	
?	... ...	... ...	John de Whwytechirch
1261	16 May–6 June ...	Amicia de Sulhere, late Prioress	
1262	... ...	... ...	Geoffrey Britoni
1268	11–28 July	Alicia Walerand; ⊕ 10 Apr. 1298	
1282	14 June; ⊕ 4 Dec. 1304	... ... [John de Pontoise]	
1286	... ...	... ...	John de Berwick
1289	3 Dec.	... ...	... ...
1294	... ...	... ...	John de Romesey
1294–7	... ...	... ...	... ...
1298	13–28 Apr.	Philippa de Stokes	
1302	... ...	... ...	John de London, *r.*
1304	14 Nov.	... ...	... ...
1305	30 May; ⊕ 28 June, 1316	... ... [Henry Woodlock]	
1307	23 Sept.–24 Nov. ...	Clemencia de Guldeford; ⊕ Dec. [1314	
1312	22 Sept.	... ...	Gilbert de Middleton; [⊕ 1330
1314–5	30 Dec.–5 Feb. ...	Alicia de Wyntereshulle; ⊕ May [1315	
1315	8 Aug.	Sybil Carbonel; ⊕ 1 June, 1333	
1316	31 Oct.; ⊕ 2 Nov. 1319	... ... [John de Sandale]	
1320	17 Nov.; ⊕ 12 Apr. 1323	... ... [Rigaud de Asserio]	
1321	11 Sept.	... ...	... ...
1323	26 June	... ... [John de Stratford]	
1325	8–10 Apr.	... ...	... ...
c. 1331	... ...	... ...	Robert de Stratford ... [Bp. Chichester, 30 Nov. 1337]

[1] The dates are given thus, owing to the mention of the young Canute taking part in the raid on Romsey when Elwina was Abbess. He was born about 994.

AND CLERGY.

Abbess
- *c.* 1025 Ælfgyfu.[2]
- *c.* 1130 Hadewisa.
- *c.* 1150 Matildis. ⊕ 1155.
- 1155 Mary, married 1161; ⊕ 1182.
- *c.* 1171–74 Juliana. ⊕ February, 1199.

Prebendary of S. Laurence Major	Prebendary of S. Laurence 2nd portion	Vicar of S. Laurence
am		
omon de Roffa		
lliam de Perham	Robert de Maydenstane	
nes Synobaldi de Florencia Archdeacon of Winchester]		
... ...	Nicholas de Maydenstane	
... .	... .	Henry de Chulmark
nard de Chaddesley, D.C.L.	Richard de Lusteshull, 15 Aug.	Henry de Langeberughe, [7 Nov.

[2] The names of Abbesses are missing for about a century.

The letter (*r*) signifies "resigned." The sign ⊕ means "death."

A. D.	Date	Abbess	[Bishop]	Prebendary of Edington
1333	11 June–3 Sept.	Johanna Icthe, late Cellaress		
,,	Sept.; ⊕ 18 July, 1345		[Adam Orlton]	
1334	17 Nov.			
1335	3–12 July			John S. Paul
1337				Gilbert de Bruera, *r.*
1338				
1344				
,,	22 July			
,,				
1346				
,,	14 May; ⊕ 7 Oct., 1366		[William de Edyndon]	
1348				
1349	6 May–22 May	Johanna Gerneys		
,,	27 June			
,,	13 July			
,,	17 Sept.			[Oct. 1351
1351	4 June			John de Edyndon, *r.*; 29
,,	28 Oct.			Walter Scarlet[1]
1352	24 and 25 Nov.	Isabella de Camoys		
1358	28 Feb.			Walter de Sevenhampton[1]
,,	6 Apr.			John de Aylesbury[2]; ⊕ 25
				[Mar. 1382
1362	8–18 Oct.			
1367	10 Oct.; ⊕ 27 Sept. 1404		[William of Wykeham]	
1372	25 Aug.			
(?)				
1374	9 June			
c. 1380				
1381	3 Feb.			
1382				Thomas Odyham
1396	17 Apr.–16 May	Lucy Everard		
1400	8 Apr.			
1405	30 July–27 Aug.	Felicia Aas		
,,	⊕ 11 Apr. 1447		[Henry Beaufort]	
1414				Thomas Culmer
1417	25 Oct.–18 Nov.	Matilda Lovell		
c. 1428				
(?)				
1433				Thomas Elme; ⊕ 21 Ap
1447	30 July; ⊕ 11 Aug. 1486		[William of Waynflete]	[145
1450				William Godwyn
1452	*c.* 28 July			

[1] Wardens of Chantry.

Prebendary of S. Laurence Major	Prebendary of S. Laurence 2nd portion	Vicar of S. Laurence
ter de Galiciano		
... . offrey le Scrope	.. ..	Nicholas de Botelston
ın de Crockford illiam de Edyndon drew de Offerd, D.C.L. ohn Wawayn]		
Villiam de Farlegh]. [In 1439 Canon of Sarum and Rector of Hurslee]		
... ...	John de Nubbeleye [last Preb.]	
... ...	... ...	William de Bures
... ...	... ...	John de Minstede [still Vicar, 1367]
alter de Sevenhampton, M.A.		
... ...	... ...	John Foliott
.. ..	... ...	Thomas Eggesworthe
am de Hertyngdon ... ... cholas de Wykeham [⊕ 1406]		
... .	... ...	Roger Purye
... ...	... ...	John Umfray [still Vicar, 1420]
ın Forest	... ...	John Kent, ex. to S. Laurence, Winchester, in 1452
ın Bayly, M.A.	... ...	John Bayly, M.A.

[2] He and his successors, Rectors of Augustinian Bonshommes.

A. D.	Date	Abbess [Bishop]	Prebendary of Edington
1462	26 April–30 May ...	Johanna Bryggys, late Prioress	
1464	... ...	... ...	William Newton
1465	6 Mar.	... ...	... ...
1472	27 May–22 June ...	Elizabeth Broke; ⊕ 12 May, 1502	
1478	17 Aug.–14 Oct. ...	El. Broke [re-elected]	
„	13 July	... ...	... ...
(?)	... ...	... ...	William Hull or Hill
1483	4 Feb.	... ...	... ...
1487	29 Jan.; ⊕ 22 Sept. 1492	... ... [Peter Courtenay]	
1493	3 Jan.	... ...	... ...
(?)	... ...	... ...	... ...
1493	⊕ 27 Jan. 1501 ...	... ... [Thomas Langton]	
1494	... ...	... ...	John S. John
1501	Spring; ⊕ 14 Sept. 1528	... ... [Richard Fox]	
1502	31 Mar.	... ...	... ...
1502	6 June–18 June ...	Joyce Rowse, late Kitchener; *r.* 16 Sept. 1515	
1505	(?)	... ...	... ...
1511	22 Oct.	... ...	... ...
1515	16 Sept.–9 Oct. ...	Anne Westbroke, late Mistress of ye School, and Sexteyness ⊕ 21 Nov., 1523	
1515	... ...	... ...	John Ryve
1520	4 Jan.	... ...	... ...
1522	30 Dec.	... ...	... ...
1523–4	24 Nov.–25 Jan. ...	Elizabeth Ryprose	
1529	Apr.; ⊕ 29 Nov. 1530	... [Thomas Wolsey]	
1531	3 Dec.; ⊕ 12 Nov. 1555	... ... [Stephen Gardiner]	
1534	... ...	... ...	... ...
1538	... ...	... ...	Paul Bush[1]
1540	28 May	... ...	... ...
1547	16 Mar.	... ...	... ...
1551	8 Mar.; ⊕ 11 Aug. 1556	... ... [John Poynet]	
1556	⊕ 12 Jan. 1560 ...	... ... [John White]	
1558	6 Sept.	... ...	... ...

[1] He surrendered Edington 31 Mar. 1539, and eventually became Bp. of Bristol.

Prebendary of S. Laurence Major	Prebendary of S. Laurence 2nd portion	Vicar of S. Laurence
ohn Pemerton	... ...	John Grene, M.A., *r.*
liver Dynham [still here, 1492]		
... ...	... ...	Edward Col[e]man, M.A.
... ... arnard Bobin, *r.*	... ...	Richard Sclater, *r.*
... ...	... ...	Thomas Nayle, M.A. [Will, dated 19 Aug. 1505]
... ... ugh Ashton [Archdeacon, 1511; res. 1519]	... ...	John Hopwode
... ... nn Dowman, LL.D.	... ...	John Newman, LL.B.
cholas Delburge		
nn Mason, *r.* Apr. 7, 1546		
... ...	... ...	Walter Morrys
... ...	... ...	Thomas Chester

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"The Test . . . . rising clear and pure out of Overton Pool."

KINGSLEY'S *Waterbabies.*

Chapter I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Town of Romsey situate in the New Forest Division of South Hampshire, though but little known to-day, was once famous. Kings visited it, and Princesses made it their dwelling-place. The Town possesses two attractions of great beauty, the Abbey Church and the River Test. It is a matter of regret that these attractions are not better known, for they afford very real pleasure to lovers of architecture, and of pleasant country scenery, such as is characteristic of these South Hampshire valleys.

The river claims prior attention, not only as the older attraction, but as being indeed the maker of Romsey, for it is quite certain that the Abbey was placed here owing to the convenient and pleasant site created by the river. No river, no abbey—and the town may therefore look with gratitude to the River Test, both as the author of its being, and as the great benefactor which caused it to be endowed with so beautiful and valuable a treasure as the Abbey Church. The Test or Teorstan, as it was called in Saxon days, rises thirty-five miles away in Overton Pool, and is said to be the longest river in the county. It flows down between chalk hills, which are a characteristic of this part of Hampshire, and has all the charms of chalk streams, such as Charles Kingsley

delighted to describe. Here are clear waters, a swift current, and the trout he loved so well.

The stream, after passing Whitchurch and Longparish, is joined by the Anton from Andover, one mile below Wherwell. At Wherwell stood a Benedictine Nunnery, made famous by the residence of two unhappy Queens. The one, Elfrida, the widow of King Edgar the Peaceable, founded it in expiation of her crime in murdering her step-son Edward at Corfe Castle. The other, Eadgyth, daughter of Earl Godwin, and the young wife of Edward the Confessor, was banished here for a time by reason of the jealousy of the Norman courtiers, and was placed under the charge of the Abbess, the King's sister. In this neighbourhood, King Edgar is reported to have slain the Ealdorman Æthelwold, for his treacherous conduct in reporting unfavourably of the charms of Ælfthryth or Elfrida, the daughter of Ordgar, Earl of Devon, and marrying the lady himself. Here too, is laid the scene of the strange wooing, by Edgar, of the Lady Wlfhilda, and of the romantic escape of this courageous maiden from the too importunate advances of her royal lover. Passing Leckford, the Test flows by Stockbridge, and a little lower down, at Horsebridge, the old Roman road from Winchester to Salisbury passes over it. To the east lies King's Sombourne, so called because the Crown held property there, and at one time owned a mansion in the parish. This village gives its name to the Hundred.

Three miles below this point the valley narrows, and the bright clear stream flows through meadows, standing thick with long grass in the summer season, and edged by borders of rushes and great reeds. From the rising ground on the west bank, a spring pours forth its waters to join the river, and at this spot stood the Priory of Mottisfont, the Mortesfunde of Domesday. When some

alterations were being made in the present dwelling-house in 1901, it was found that several of the rooms had been constructed within the old Priory Church. The first settlement of Augustinian Monks was made here in the reign of King John, when William Briwere of King's Sombourne, Chief Baron of Hampshire, and Sheriff of the County in 1207, founded the Priory. His benevolent example was followed by his brother the hermit, Peter de Rivallis, known as "the holy man in the wall," who enriched Mottisfont with his savings. On the same side of the river, but lower down, is Kimbridge, which once belonged to the Cantertons, a New Forest family.

Away on a hill to the east is the village of Michelmersh, called Michelmareys in a deed of *circa* 1248, and Miclamersee in a Saxon charter of King Ethelred II, of 985. Possibly the name indicates the great marsh which stretched out below the village right across the valley of the Test. The manor of this village, from the time of Queen Emma, the wife (successively) of Æthelred the Unready and Canute, belonged to the Priory of St. Swithun's, Winchester. It was part of the Queen's property and was given by her to St. Swithun's as a thank-offering, so runs the legend, on her acquital from a base charge of too great intimacy with Bishop Alwine, she having successfully passed the ordeal of walking barefoot on hot ploughshares. Below Mottisfont the river turns slightly to the east, and the church of Timsbury or Timberbury stands on slightly rising ground on the left or eastern bank. This church was attached to, or dependent on, one of the Prebendal Stalls of Romsey, and is an ancient Norman edifice. On the opposite bank, and a little away from the river, is the site of the ancient manor house of Stanbridge, the home so it has been conjectured of Ethelwulfe, the father of Alfred the Great. The present house dates only from the time of

Queen Elizabeth. On the hill a little further south may be seen Roke or Oke Manor. Below the hill is a wood called Squab or Quabbe, which takes its name from the marshy nature of the ground. Near Kimbridge, the river, uniting with another stream from Lockerly and East Dean, flows out into a wide valley, which is intersected by many streams and which no doubt formed, in the old days, the Great Marsh referred to above in reference to the name of the village of Michelmersh.

Many mills are turned by these streams to-day, just as similar ones have been turned by the same water power for probably a thousand years. Three mills are mentioned in Domesday as belonging to Romsey. The Town is not only surrounded by these streams, which form an island, but it actually stands upon several of the smaller ones. A branch of the Fishlake Stream flows under Porter's Bridge Street and crosses the Hundred on the east side of the Market Place, at a spot where the Hundred Bridge formerly stood. Another branch of this stream, which divides the parish into Romsey Infra and Romsey Extra, passes beneath the pavement in Church or Churchstigel, *i.e.*, Churchstyle Street, and flowing through the Market Place, makes its way round by the Abbey Gate and turns the Abbey Mill No. I. This stream finds its way out of the town by a double branch and joins the stream of Abbey Mill No. II. To the west of the great church there are two streams, one at the foot of the vicarage meadow which turns Abbey Mill No. II, and the other, the main stream or old Teorstan lying some few hundred yards beyond, which, after being turned to account by Sadler's Mill, receives the water of the lesser streams and flows under Middlebridge. The water about these mills is clear, bright, and swift, and it is pleasant on a summer's evening to watch the trout lying quiet under the bank or gliding up

stream, and to hear the splash of the water as one rises to a fly. At Sadler's Mill, in spawning time, salmon may be seen leaping high out of the water, bars of glowing silver, and casting themselves into the mill race in their mad endeavour to win the higher reaches of the stream.

Perhaps the marshy nature of the ground gave the place-name to Romsey; "Rom," it is true, means broad, but "Ruimne" means marshy, and the name almost certainly originated with the latter and means, "the isle in the marshes." It is spelt in a variety of ways, Romeseye, Romsey, Rumsey, and in the Hyde Register, (A.D. 1016–25,) Hrumesig, where the expression *Nomina sororum Hrumensis Cœnobii* is also found. If the marshy character of the ground be thought to have originated the name, the similar conditions and names found in the case of Ramsey, Hunts, of Romney, Kent, and of Rumbridge, lower down the Test, will give point to the argument. It may also be worth noticing that "Rhymni" is used to indicate the marshy land, in Monmouth, on a river called by the same name, from the nature of the land through which it flows. If "Ruimne" be Gaelic, says Mr. Shore in his *History of Hampshire*, "Romsey is a very early name and we may suppose there was a settlement before Saxon times."

After passing the modern Middlebridge, built in place of an older structure which is mentioned in the records of the Civil Wars, the Test flows at the foot of Broadlands' or Brodelondes' Lawns. Pauncefoot Hill lies away on the right, going down stream, and the road after passing it leads in about two miles to a spur of high ground overlooking the valley, where is a small hamlet called Ridge or Rige. On the opposite side of the valley and at some distance is Ashfield or Ashfold, and straight ahead in the meadow land, as its name implies, is the hamlet of Lee.

The river dividing into two branches passes Moorecourt and the Manor of Wade by Oure on the right, and Grove Place with the Manor of Welles on the left. The latter place is frequently referred to from early days, but the present mansion dates from the time of Queen Elizabeth.

About three miles from Romsey, Nursling Church is reached. In old days a monastery stood here, made famous as the home of St. Boniface, from whence he went forth to carry on his missionary work throughout Germany. At the time of the Danish incursions in the tenth century Nursling or Nutceling perished, and the monastery was never rebuilt.

At Redbridge, Southampton Water meets the river, and here Romsey Abbey owned a saltern ; close by are Totton or Todyngton and Eling, both of which places are connected with the Abbey. Testwood, too, is a familiar name in records of the neighbourhood, and Rumbridge, already referred to, lay between the two former places. On the west side of the head of the Water lies Marchwood, sometimes called Marchwood Rumsey, owing to a family of the name of Rumsey having possessed it in old days. Southampton Water at full tide is graceful and picturesque with a peaceful still beauty, but to be appreciated it should be seen in its glory, with the setting sun kindling the dark waters into flame.

This slight survey of the course of the River Test and of the villages, hamlets, manors, and farms on either bank may be of use in giving a general idea of the country, and of the various names and places which will frequently be met with in any description of the Records of Romsey.

SKETCH MAP OF TH

WARREN, LITHO, WINCHESTER

Places, where Romsey Abbey held pl

E DISTRICT.

operty marked thus: ——

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 907—1025.

THE FOUNDATION.

"The race of Alfred covets glorious pains,
. . . . . bold to strive
With the fierce tempest, while, within the round
Of their protection, gentle virtues thrive."—WORDSWORTH.

Chapter II.

THE FOUNDATION.

THE first establishment of a religious house at Romsey was made by King Edward the Elder, the son and successor of Alfred the Great. Edward's reign lasted for twenty-three years (901—924), and he is supposed to have founded Romsey Abbey in 907.

The Nunnery was, at this time, quite a small house, and similar to Saint Mary's, at Winchester, which is described as "the little Monastery" (monasteriolium); it may indeed be doubted if the sisters lived in community under one roof. Very little is known about this establishment. King Edward's eldest daughter by Ælflæda, his first wife, was buried here; her name was Ælflæda, she and her sister Æthelhilda, both entered the religious life, but the latter as a lay sister only. They are connected with the Monastery at Wilton, near Salisbury, and whilst Æthelhilda was buried there, Ælflæda found a resting place at Romsey. Her Obit was commemorated at Saint Mary's, Winchester, on March 6th, and probably at Romsey also. It has been said that she was Abbess of Romsey. This is, by no means, unlikely, because of her kinship with the Founder, and her burial there. Her half-sister, St. Edburga, lived and died a member of the sister establishment of Saint Mary's, Winchester, and of her it is recorded that she not only became Abbess, but that finally her name was joined with

the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a Patron Saint of that House. St. Edburga died in the year 925 (?); her Obit was kept on 15th June, and her Translation on the 18th July. Leland, quoting from an ancient writer, says "that Elfleda, Abbess of St. Mary's, re-covered the mortuary chest of St. Edburga with gold and silver." If the reference is to Romsey and to the daughter of Edward the Elder, it would go far to establish the supposition that Ælfleda was an Abbess of Romsey. She must, however, be carefully distinguished from a later Abbess and Saint, whose name was coupled with the Blessed Virgin Mary as a Patron Saint of Romsey Abbey.

These ladies, the daughters of Edward, and grand-daughters of Alfred, were not unworthy of the stock from which they sprang, and seem to have repaid the great care spent upon them. It is recorded that Edward the Elder carried on the traditions of his father and caused his children to be very carefully educated. "In childhood, his daughters gave their whole attention to literature, and afterwards employed themselves in the labours of the distaff and needle." There are vestments, including a stole, at Durham, which Athelstan, the son and successor of Edward, offered for the body of Saint Cuthbert. "The stole is woven in gold wire, with self-edged openings for the insertion of figures of the prophets and letters in tapestry work. On it is inscribed the sentence 'Aelflæd fieri præcepit pio episcopo Fridestana.' (*Ælflæd caused it to be made for the pious bishop, Frithestan.*) The two names inscribed show that this stole was worked by the ladies of the Court at Winchester, 910–915, when Edward's daughters were being educated there." Frithestan was Bishop of Winchester 909–931, and the Ælflæd, here spoken of, was the Queen of Edward the Elder, and mother of Ælfleda of Romsey. It may be that the young

Princesses took part in making these very vestments, and in any case these specimens of Saxon work exhibit a glimpse of the refined and elevating surroundings amidst which the daughters of Edward were brought up.

There is no information available as to the Romsey Nunnery at this time, but the "little monastery" at Winchester may serve to illustrate the first fifty years of Romsey history. By the middle of the century Saint Mary's was nearly ruined, and was refounded under King Edgar by the energy of Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester. Now Romsey was also refounded at the same time, and extensive additions were made to its possessions by King Edgar; it is therefore likely that this house also had fallen upon bad times, and had sunk into decay. The decay was general; the King declares, "All the monasteries in my realm, to the outward sight, are nothing but worm-eaten and rotten timber and boards; and that worse is, they are almost empty and devoid of divine service." But if the decay was general, the reform and restoration of the monastic system was carried out with vigour and success. In after days, men looked back to the reign of Edgar *the Peaceable* as to a glorious time; abundant epithets were attached to his name to express the feeling with which the peace and prosperity of the strong rule was regarded. The success of this rule depended greatly upon the vigorous ministers whom Edgar associated with himself; the names of Dunstan, and Æthelwold Bishop of Winchester, are well known, and they carried their vigour not least into the reorganisation of the monasteries. In this work they were greatly assisted by Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, who had studied the revival of monastic discipline in the Benedictine houses abroad, by a residence at Fleury, the chief centre of the revival.

In the year 964 the clergy of Saint Swithun's, Win-

chester, were driven out, and regular monks of the Benedictine order were introduced; and about the same time Saint Mary's in the same city was remodelled. Sometime before 966 the attention of the King and his ministers was given to Romsey; in this year the King renewed the privileges of the Nunnery and confirmed to the sisters their liberty, so long as they should elect their Abbess according to the rule of Saint Benedict.

"To the nuns, living according to the rule, I concede for ever the liberty of monastic privilege, so long after the death of the illustrious Abbess Merwenna (in whose time this restoration of liberty was conceded by the favour of Christ) as the liberty of this privilege is held successively in personal use by all; the whole congregation of the aforesaid monastery, electing according as the rule instituted of the blessed Benedict appoints, shall elect an Abbess rightly out of the same company of sisters. Nor may anyone from outside, trusting to tyrannical contumacy in the aforesaid monastery and taking it by force, exercise the right of power in the aforesaid monastery."

The King after speaking of their illustrious Abbess Merwenna, makes a reference to his Catholic predecessors, and confirms to the Monastery the lands granted by kings, and people of either sex. There is an interesting addition at the close of the Charter which recounts how for the wood belonging to this land, there was given to the King 900 mancuses of golden marks in a goblet of wonderful workmanship, and in cups beautifully sculptured, and a case gorgeously decorated in gold. In 968 Edgar granted land at Edington and Ashton in Wiltshire, and freed it from all yoke of service with three exceptions, which are found in other charters of this period: military service, repair of bridges, and maintenance of fortifications. The King did not forget the poor, and alms were yearly distributed at the rate of £1 each between thirteen poor and feeble women, and seven old and feeble men, according to his foundation, and this was continued down to the time of the suppression of the Monasteries.

THE NAVE ROMSEY ABBEY (XIIth and XIIIth centuries).

To face p. 14.]

In 972 the King's son, Edmund Atheling, was buried at Romsey, and the saintly Merwenna found a resting-place here according to the Anglo-Saxon lists; her obit was kept on 13th May, but the year of her death is unknown. One list mentions that Queen Batildis* was enshrined in Romsey Abbey; the reference is probably to some portion of her body which was kept as a precious relic, as the custom was in those days.

No doubt great interest was taken in the Royal Monastery, and many gifts were received; a mysterious reference in the Charter of Edgar refers to "the golden crucifix, which speaks in Latin, and the evergreen boughs, an þare goleggede (gold edged?) hausel mid golde, given to the same place." The text of this paragraph is said to be very corrupt. In 982 Ethelmere, the Governor of Hampshire, left £2 to the Monastery, an instance probably of many such bequests.

Great as was Edgar's rule, the King does not seem to have been free from the faults of his age. Several stories of a scandalous nature have survived, and are to be found in the early writers. Possibly they are not all or entirely true, probably there was some cause for them.

As a youth he had been brought up by Alfwen, the wife of Athelstan, the half-king of East Anglia, his foster brothers being the celebrated Ethelwold, Ælfwold, and the pious Æthelwine, called "the friend of God," from his beneficence towards the religious. Ethelwold succeeded his father, and a legendary story paints both him and Edgar in very unpleasing colours.

Sometime about 960 Edgar, then seventeen years old, heard of the beauty of a certain Æthelthryth or Elfrida,

*This lady was of Saxon birth, the wife of one, Clovis the II, and the mother of three Frankish Kings. She was a great benefactor of Monasteries, and especially of Chelles, near Paris, where she was buried *circa* 678.

the daughter of Ordgar, Duke of Devonshire. The story, as related by William of Malmesbury (12th century), is as follows:—"There was in his (Edgar's) time, one Athelwold, a nobleman of celebrity, and one of his confidants; him the King had commissioned to visit Elfrida, daughter of Ordgar, Duke of Devonshire (whose charms had so fascinated the eyes of some persons that they commended her to the King), and to offer her marriage, if her beauty were really equal to report. Hastening on his embassy, and finding everything consonant to general estimation, he concealed his mission from her parents, and procured the damsel for himself. Returning to the King, he told a tale which made for his own purpose, that she was a girl of vulgar and commonplace appearance, and by no means worthy of such transcendent dignity. When Edgar's heart was disengaged from this affair, and employed on other amours, some tattlers acquainted him how completely Athelwold had duped him by his artifices. Driving out one nail with another, that is returning him deceit for deceit, he showed the Earl a fair countenance, and, as in a sportive manner, appointed a day when he should visit this far-famed lady. Terrified almost to death with this dreadful pleasantry, he hastened before to his wife, entreating that she should administer to his safety by attiring herself as unbecomingly as possible; then, first disclosing the intention of such a proceeding. But what did not this woman dare? She was hardy enough to deceive the confidence of her miserable lover, her first husband, to adorn herself at the mirror and to omit nothing which could stimulate the desire of a young and powerful man. Nor did events happen contrary to her design; for he fell so desperately in love with her the moment he saw her, that, dissembling his indignation, he sent for the Earl into a wood at Warewell, under pretence of hunting, and ran him through with a javelin."

Gaimar, in his historical poem of the twelfth century, gives a much more graphic and detailed account of this story. It is too long to quote at length, but two points are worth referring to. Gaimar relates that a son was born to Athelwold, and that because Athelwold feared the King he begged him to stand as godfather, thereby causing Edgar to become bound by ties of spiritual affinity to Elfrida, which he hoped would be an effectual check to any possibility of marriage. Gaimar adds that Elfrida never loved Athelwold, and would never have borne him a son if she could have helped it. Besides relating the birth of a child, Gaimar gives a different account of Athelwold's end. "The King had summoned the barons to guard the land. He sent Athelwold to York; he entrusted him with the land in the north; all judicature from the Humber northwards he committed to his command. Hastily and without delay he set out to direct (the affairs of) the country; he received such writs as he desired. Now Lord Edelwold departed. In going to this land he did not know what people he would meet there; they were outlaws and enemies; there then this wicked man was killed. Some say that King Edgar sent this company, but no one knows so much about it as to dare to affirm that it was he who killed him."

The scandalous part of the story is rejected by modern historians, and it has been proved by Mr. E. W. Robertson, in his historical essays, that the King did not marry Elfrida till 964, two years after Ethelwold's death, which took place in 962. But it was worth the telling here, because it introduces both persons and places intimately connected with Romsey Abbey.

Ethelwold had married as his first wife a lady of noble descent—Brithwina—by whom he had several children. His youngest daughter, either by her or by his second wife, Elfrida, was baptized by the name of Æthelflæda. Before

her father died, and while he lay sick, he commanded his wife (Elfrida?) to found Romsey Monastery, and dedicate it in honour of Mary the Mother of God, in the town in which they were then living. On his death his wife, not forgetful of his command, gave their house at Clare to Romsey Church. This property may without doubt be identified with the land held by Romsey, at Sydmanton, in the Hundred of Clere Regis or Kingsclere in North Hampshire. The Manor formed part of the Abbey's possessions at the time when Doomesday was compiled, and continued in the hands of the Convent down to the suppression of the Monasteries. One account says that Æthelflæda was not born until after her father's death. If this be so her mother must have been Elfrida the celebrated beauty of Devonshire. That this lady married again two years after her husband's death is a fact of history. She became Queen in spite of the rule that second marriages were uncanonical and that priests were forbidden to bless such unions. Archbishop Dunstan appears to have reproved the royal couple and to have besought them to part, but in vain.

Except for the mystery of her birth, the story of Æthelflæda's life is fairly plain and straightforward. "As she grew in years so she grew without care for earthly things, but owing to her step-mother's second marriage, and the gift of Clare to Romsey, she became destitute, which, Edgar hearing of, he, with the consent of the Queen, placed her at Romsey, under the care of the saintly Merwenna, whom he had made Abbess of that house." Here she took the veil, and was consecrated by Bishop Æthelwold, sometime before Edgar's death in 975, when she would have been at least thirteen years old.

The following account of the Saint is taken from a MS. once in the Library of Romsey Convent, and now to

be found amongst the B.M. MSS., Lands, No. 436. It is described in the catalogue as belonging to the fourteenth century, and contains a chronicle of the Saxon Kings and the Lives of English Saints, there are forty-seven lives, of which the sixteenth is headed thus :—

Here begins the account of Saint Alfleda and Saint Merwinna, Virgins and Abbesses.

During the reign of Edgar, the illustrious and most Christian King of the English, there was a certain nobleman, by name Edwold, who, on account of his probity and tried fidelity, seemed to the King to excel all the rest of the courtiers of the royal service.

The King therefore gave to him in marriage Brichgiva, a young lady discreet in manners and handsome in form, and near of kin to his wife, Queen Elfrida. This lady had by him a large family of sons and daughters. Now, before the birth of her last daughter, in sign that she should be a child of light and worthy of God, the mother saw in a dream a ray of the glorious sun break forth above her head. In due time she gave birth to a daughter, re-born by the Holy Spirit through Baptism, by the Christian name Athelfleda. Who, born and re-born, was always pleasing to Christ, because the more she grew in age and stature, so much the more fully was she without desire for carnal pleasures. Which King Edgar hearing of, and not unmindful of the probity and fidelity of the dead Ethelwold, delivered the daughter Athelfleda, who was near of kin to the Queen, to the Blessed Merwenna, Abbess of the Monastery of Romsey, which he had constructed, to be brought up by her. After a time the Blessed Merwynna, having proved her to be active in the works of saintliness and obedience, recognised her as one who would undoubtedly profit under God's favour in the church. She therefore cherished her

with the privilege of so great a love, that in going out and coming in, by day and by night, she desired to have her continually in attendance. And right well did Abbess Merwynna behave as a most sweet mother to Ethelfleda, and Ethelfleda as a most loving daughter to Merwynna. The one taught the way of the Lord in truth as a most modest mother, and the other, by entire obedience as a dutiful daughter, retained zealously what she had been taught. The one, as a torch of light, showed the way without error along the path of righteousness, the other, delighting in such a leader, followed without stumbling. The one on fasting days chastened her body by hunger, the other, whatever by abstinence from food she withheld from the body, she distributed to the poor in secret.

The King and Queen, pleased with her saintliness, with the consent of the Blessed Merwynna, caused her to be consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester, of good memory. And she lived henceforward under Abbess Merwynna for some time, abundant in virtues, generous in alms, constant in watches, in speech vigilant, in mind humble, of joyful countenance, and kindly mannered to the poor. And that she might hide her saintliness and be able to help the destitute, she pretended at table among her companions to drink when she did not drink, and to eat when she did not eat, hiding in her sleeves the food which she was intending to bestow upon the poor.

Applying herself constantly to prayer, she loved the ecclesiastical and regular institutions, insomuch that she would never hear or say the canonical hours, as long as she lived the cloister life with the convent sisters, except within the church, nor would she omit any Hour on account of any secular business, nor be hindered by the greatest indisposition of body. In the church, the Blessed Ethelfleda in the singing and reading which were enjoined

her was careful to fulfil her turn without a murmur. How acceptable to God her service was, He deigned to show by a glorious miracle. On her night for reading the lesson after receiving the benediction she approached the pulpit, but the lamp which she took in her hand to give light for reading was extinguished, I do not say by chance, but by the providence of God, as the sequel showed. O, great grace of God! abundant mercy did not permit light in darkness to be without light. For such brilliance shone around from the fingers of the right hand of Ethelfleda, the handmaiden of God, that it gave the clearest light to those around, and ministered to the reading very brilliantly. Nor did the heavenly splendour pass away before the lesson was entirely read by the servant of God, and the earthly light brought in. Wherefore it is to be ascribed to the finger of God that those fingers were illuminated, which, as is believed, were wholly free from unlawful touch.

It happened once on a time that her teacher went into a plantation of saplings, near to the house, where Athelfleda with the rest of the young girls was accustomed to study. Now whilst the mistress alone and without any witness was privately cutting the switches, the Blessed Athelfleda miraculously saw through the wall of the stone house, as through a glass, the saplings in the hands of the mistress cut for beating herself or her companions, which, tied up into bundles, she feared no less for them than for herself. But the mistress returning and bearing the switches, concealed and secretly, has scarcely crossed the threshold of the house when her scholar, having cast herself at her feet, exclaimed in a loud but firm voice, with many tears, "Do not, Mistress, do not beat us with the switches: we will sing and chant at your pleasure, willingly, as much or as long as you wish or command. When we gladly carry

out orders, why do you beat us?" The mistress, wondering beyond measure how her scholar became possessed of her secret, said, "Rise up my daughter, rise up, and show me how you know that I have brought any switches." And she said, "I saw you under the tree whence you plucked them, and you still hold them under your cloak." It was found by careful enquiry that what was done by the mistress could not have been known by the scholar, save through the Holy Spirit, who works in each one according to His Will, and that the sight of this (girl) pierced the thickness of a stone wall, by the power of God, who caused the eyes of the man born blind to be opened, so that the blind could miraculously see.

Now the blessed Ethelfleda made a custom of going every night outside the dormitory, where it seemed to her that she could most conveniently and secretly immerse herself naked in the cold water of a fountain or in the bed of the running stream, and stay in for so long as time permitted, chanting the Davidic Psalms, many or few, together with some prayers in addition. It happened once, that, on account of her good fame, the Queen called the blessed Ethelfleda to herself and kept her honourably in her chamber. She unwillingly made some little stay there, always fearful lest the deceitful pleasure of earthly vanities,—which she often saw practised around the Queen, as the manner is, in dress, behaviour, and other things, which are called by the gay, refinement, but which hinder from holy religion,—should recall her mind from her holy purpose. On her first arrival, sitting on a terrace and looking round, she saw, near the chamber, a spring of fresh water. To this she went every night without delay, as had been her custom elsewhere, secretly, when the others in the chamber were sleeping, by door or by window, as seemed most convenient, and, having undressed, she chanted and

prayed in the water as long as was possible to her. At length, having returned, she was found in the morning in bed like the others, apparently sleeping as though she had done nothing else through the whole night. One night, however, when the Queen could not sleep for thinking, she saw the holy woman go alone and without witness from the room, and, not knowing her secret, she imagined her to be going out for immodest purposes at such an hour of the night, rather than for any other cause. The handmaid of God went out, and the Queen followed. The one, having made the sign of the Cross in the water, sprang in, and the other, perhaps seeing a sign in the heavens, was distracted with excessive amazement, and returning to the threshold of the chamber, screamed loudly and fell to the ground. Those who were by gathered round her in wonder, and took her into their arms, but she, utterly wanting her senses, tossed about in their hands, as if frantic. But, whereas the cause was quite unknown to the others, it was revealed from heaven to the holy virgin alone; who, thinking over the matter silently, immediately prostrated herself on the ground and mingled tears with her prayer without ceasing, until the Queen was restored to her former health, and said constantly, among the other words of her prayer, "Lord, direct my prayer in Thy sight, and lay not this sin to her charge, who knows not what she has done."

In course of time, when the blessed Ethelfleda was renowned for miracles such as this, Saint Merwynna, the Abbess dear to God, departed this life to Christ, and Ethelfleda, the handmaid of God, succeeded her in the office of prelate, although not immediately. By so much as she was placed above others, so much the more did she seem to be an example of humility and saintliness. She delighted especially in exercising works of mercy towards the poor, of which hear what happened. One of the

bailiffs, to whose keeping the tenements of the church were committed, who was her household servant, placed in the coffers of the Abbess, for safe keeping, the whole payment which he was bound to render in one year for his custody. The handmaid of God, however, whose care was ever of the poor, withdrew from the coffers, little by little, and distributed to the needy all the money committed to her, and when it became time for the bailiffs to render account of rents received for the whole year to the steward who was placed over them, the servant demanded back the money which he had delivered to the Lady Abbess. But of the squandered money only one farthing was found. The bailiff, in anxiety, did not know what to do and the Abbess was placed in no less difficulty. She blushed to make public her expenses, and could charge them neither to her subtlety or extravagance, and much less to the religion, which, above all things, she desired to hide. What shall she do? With whom shall she seek refuge? With Him assuredly, who is the Helper of those in tribulation and anxiety, in whose service also the whole spending of the money had been carried out. The Blessed Ethelfleda, purposing moreover with great earnestness to defend the innocence of her young servant from infamy, directed her prayer to the Lord, in whom she had ever placed her whole hope, with great confidence, and said: "God who hast created all things out of nothing, and has caused all things created by Thee wonderfully to obey Thy commands, multiply on us Thy mercy, Who dost not forsake those who hope in Thee. I, indeed, have hoped in Thee, and Thou hast not withheld from my desire. And now, so direct this matter, that I shall not be confounded; and, if not hearkened to by Thee, I shall be put into exceeding confusion, like to those who begin a building, and, not having first reckoned the cost, are not able to finish, and so

my enemies will laugh me to scorn. God, who multipliest the things which we have, and wonderfully restorest the lost, restore the money spent on the needy to the honour of Thy Name. For Thou hast said, 'What thou hast done to one of My little ones, thou hast done to Me.'" What more? The prayer ended, the coffers, previously empty, were found full of money, and the bailiff, having been called, the whole money was restored to him with great joy. The servant, in despair before, ran, without doubt, to his reckoning, The holy virgin, indeed, hastily directed her way to the Church in order to render thanks to the most high God, who looked on her humility and snatched her from confusion, and said, "God, Thou filled the cruise of oil lest it should fail, and multiplied five loaves so that they sufficed for five thousand men, to this day Thou hast not forgotten to do marvellous things, but hast restored the money delivered to me and spent. Blessed be Thy Name, both now and ever, world without end. Amen."

After these things the Blessed Ethelfleda, renowned for miracles and full of virtues, departed this life 10 Kal. November [23rd October], going from the body of this death to life, from temporal pain to unfading glory. A great multitude of women buried the pious virgin outside the sacred oratory, as she herself had directed, for she did not appoint for herself a tomb in a more conspicuous place, whom vain glory had never prevailed on to err. As she had preferred a life of humility under regular discipline, so, in the time of her dissolution, she chose humble burial out of doors in the porch (atrio-churchyard). And thus, Ethelfleda, an uncorruptible and glorious virgin, rested for some time in the same place in which she was buried, but, afterwards, miracles having increased, she was translated into the church with fitting honour [27th January], where Christ, on account of the merits of his spouse, bestows

immediate benefits on those who ask, "to the praise and glory of His Name, to whom be honour and dominion, world without end."

When the illustrious Abbess Merwynna died, Ethelfleda did not at once take her place, a certain Elwina succeeded her. This lady, "prostrate before the Altar in prayer, was counted worthy to hear a voice falling from heaven (which told) of the coming of the Danes to the Monastery of Romsey on the next evening. And she, gathering up the relics and other posssesions, fled with the sisters to Winchester," and was hospitably received by the Nuns of Saint Mary's. "So Swanus, the king of the Danes, with his son Canute, coming to these parts, destroyed what was left by fire and sword."

The Saxon Chronicle describes how, in 994, after fruitlessly besieging London, the Danes "wrought the utmost evil that ever army could do, by burning and plundering and by man-slaying, both by sea and coast, and among the East Saxons, and in the land of Kent and in Sussex and in Hampshire." A description of a similar raid in the year 1006, found in the same Chronicle, paints in a graphic way the terror of the times. "And then, in mid-winter, ... throughout Hampshire, into Berkshire, and to Reading; and they did their old wont; they lighted war beacons as they went . . . . . they joined battle and they soon brought that band to flight, and afterwards carried their booty to the sea. But there might the Winchester men see an army, daring and fearless, as they went by their gates towards the sea, and fetched themselves food and treasures over fifty miles." Milner dates Elwina's flight in 992; the Victorian County History, possibly owing to the mention of the young Canute, who was born about 994, dates the flight of the nuns during the terrible years

succeeding the massacre of the Danes on Saint Brice's day, 13th November, 1002; if, however, Elwina succeeded in 993, the date would be the raid of 994. Elwina remained Abbess for only three years, and the Holy Virgin Elfleda, beloved of the sisters, was elected in her place; she lived many years, and died in a good old age on the 23rd October. In the quaint words of an old MS.: "After that she had by long well-doing freighted and replenished herself with virtuous treasure and celestial riches withall, she sayled safely out of this world and happily arrived at the Heavenly porte."

In the Romsey Psalter there are three dates in the Calendar relating to the Saint. Her feast, entered in red letters, on the 23rd October, her translation on the 27th January, and the Revelacio on the 10th March.

A Collect is added at the end of Capgrave's life :—

"(O) gloriosa virgo sponsaque dei Elfleda, pro nobis dominum regem celorum supplicamus rogita. Ora pro nobis."

"Deus, qui presentem diem nobis honorabilem in beate Elflede deposicione fecisti, illius meritis optinentibus salva nos per indulgenciam, qui nos dignatus es salvare per graciam per. . . . .

In a Benedictional of the eleventh century, once belonging to Romsey Abbey, and now amongst the Add. MSS. in the B.M. (No. 28,188), her name occurs both in the greater and lesser Litany "Sca Ægelflæd or." Her feast continued to be observed in Romsey, and a fair was held, and at some time unknown her name was coupled with that of the Blessed Virgin in the dedication of the Abbey. Her name is found with Merwynna's, the former fourteenth and the latter ninth, in a list of illustrious women, who, by their interest or gifts, commended themselves to the prayers of the Monastery of Hyde, Winchester.

In the book in which this list is found, the Register and Martyrology of Hyde, a very precious piece of information

is preserved about Romsey, at a time when nothing is known about the Abbey. The names of two abbesses are enrolled and those of fifty-two sisters.

NOMINA SORORUM HRUMENSIS CęNOBII.

i. Ƿulfynn abbatissa illius sancti coenobii .
ii. Ælfgyfu abbatissa .
iii. Ælflæd .
iiii. Ælfgyfu .
v. Ƿulflæd .
vi. Ælfgyfu .
vii. Ælfhild .
viii. Ælflæd .
ix. Eadgyð .
x. Ælflæd .
xi. Æþelflæd .
xii. Byrhflæd .
xiii. Ælflæd .
xiiii. Eadgyfu .
xv. Ælfgyfu .
xvi. Eadgyfu .
xvii. Byrhtgyfu .
xviii. Æþelgyfu .
xix. Ælfgyfu .
xx. Ælfhild .
xxi. Æþelƿyn .
xxii. Ælfgyfu .
xxiii. Ælflæd .
xxiiii. Ase .
xxv. Eadgyfu .
xxvi. Ƿulflæd .
xxvii. Ƿulfrun .
xxviii. Eadgyð .
xxix. Hildeburh .
xxx. Osƿaru .
xxxi. Ælfgyð .
xxxii. Ƿulfþryð .
xxxiii. Ælfleof .
xxxiiii. Eadgyð .
xxxv. Ælfgyfu .
xxxvi. Æðelhild .
xxxvii. Ƿulfþryð .
xxxviii. Ƿulfsƿryð .
xxxix. Æþelgyfu .
xl. Ƿilsƿyð .
xli. Ælflæd .
xlii. Leofsydu .
xliii. Ælfgyð .
xliiii. Ælfgyfu .
xlv. Eadgyþ .
xlvi. Ƿyngifu .
xlvii. Ƿulfrun .
xlviii. Godgyfu .
xlix. Æþelgyfu .
l. Ƿulflæd .
li. Byrhflæd .
lii. Ælfrun .
liii. Ælfþryð .
liiii. Eadgyfu .

This list was inserted when the Register was drawn up (1016–25) and therefore there can be little doubt that

these Abbesses succeeded Abbess Æthælfleda, and the succession of Romsey rulers is carried on to the close of the first quarter of the eleventh century.

This list of the Sisters of Romsey in the Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, following, as it does, similar lists of Abingdon and Ely Monks, makes it probable that Romsey was united by an agreement of spiritual confraternity with Hyde Abbey. There is certain evidence that it was so united with Saint Swithun's, Winchester. In a chartulary of that house (B.M., Add. MSS., 29436, ff 446, b 45), Romsey, Wherwell, Abingdon, Chertsey, Tewkesbury, and many other places, are described as having entered into compact with Saint Swithun's. It is also certain that Romsey was united with Durham in similar bonds of confraternity in the fifteenth century, and no doubt with many other places from early days, as this custom, beginning amongst the religious houses in the eighth century, extended to the sixteenth.

An Anglo-Saxon agreement between certain bishops and abbots, enumerating the terms of a fellowship in early days, declares that each member when he celebrated Mass "shall separately commemorate with three collects his fellow-brotherhood, and orders a separate Mass to be said for the associates." Another agreement mentions "prayers and good deeds." Mr. de Gray Birch speaks of "the members of one house entering into a binding agreement with those of the other to share its joys and fears, to lean mutually upon each other for moral and spiritual support, and to benefit by the ghostly exercises and worldly experiences of their fellow-labourers in the field of Christ." Whilst these unions for mutual prayer and service had in view the welfare of the living, they did not exclude but rather expressly included the departed. Some agreements indeed refer only to the departed, and possibly these were

the more numerous. The chief known agreements with Romsey are of this nature, and consisted of offices and masses for the dead.

An elaborate system grew up, whereby a messenger was despatched from a monastery once a year, bearing a Roll inscribed with the names of the deceased members. He went the round of the houses in confraternity, who welcomed him, and treated him as one of their own members, The roll was taken to the scriptorium, and the acknowledgment of its reception was inscribed, and an assurance given that the services would be duly performed. Then the messenger, called "breviger," "rotularius," or "rollifer," was speeded on his way to the next house, and he passed from place to place, sometimes crossing the sea before he might return to the monastery which sent him. Some of these rolls contain an immense number of names of monasteries. A Durham Roll, sent to Romsey in the fifteenth century, was thirteen yards long, nine inches broad, and was made up of nineteen sheets of parchment; it contained an illustration of the death and burial of one of the Priors of Durham, three feet in length. Another Roll, or "Titulus" as it was called, of the Nunnery of Lillechurch at Higham in Kent, went the round of 360 religious houses.

ROMSEY ENTRIES ON THE DURHAM ROLLS.

No. 230.—Titulus Monasterii Beatæ Mariæ de Romesey, Ordinis St. Ben: Wynton Dioc:

Anima domini Wilhelmi Ebchestre[1] et anima domini Johannis Burnbury,[2] et animæ omnium fidelium defunctorum, per miserecordiam Dei in pace requiescant.

Vestris nostra damus, pro nostris
Vestra rogamus.

[The entry was made after Mottisfont and before S. Swithun's, Winchester. Fair legible hand.]

[1] Resigned 1456. [2] ⊕ 17 Oct. 1464.

No. 118.—Romeseye, Eccles : St. Mariæ et St. Ethelffledæ.

[For Bp. Walter Skirlaw. ⊕ 1416. The entry was made after Lettele [*i.e.* Netley] and Southampton and before Motisfonte and Werewell. Superior hand.]

No. 338.—Romesey, Mon. St. Mariæ et St. Ethelfledæ virg :—Ben : Wynt : Dioc :

[For Prior John Hemmingburgh. ⊕ 1416. The entry was made after S. Denys, Southampton, and before Lettele. Superior hand.]

No. 256.—Romesey, Eccl : Beatæ Mariæ Virg : et Monalium, Ord : St. Bened :

[For Prior Robert Ebchester. ⊕ 1484. Superior hand.]

From the order of the places and names it appears that the messenger of Roll 1, came by Mottisfont and went on to Winchester ; he of Roll 2, came *viâ* Netley and Southampton and went on to Mottisfont and Wherwell ; Roll 3, was brought from S. Denis, Southampton, and carried from Romsey to Netley. The Romsey entry in the first Roll is described as in a fair legible hand, the other three Rolls have Romsey entries in a superior hand ; and it may be assumed therefore that the Abbey possessed both at the beginning and close of the fifteenth century an excellent scribe.

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CHAPTER III.

A.D. 1025—1118.

THE SAXON PRINCESSES.

"The Letters of Queen Matilda to Archbishop Anselm, and her charitable deeds, throw light on the Latinity of the Romsey pupil, and on the tastes she had imbibed there."

L. ECKENSTEIN, *Women under Monasticism.*

Chapter III.

THE SAXON PRINCESSES.

FEW facts have come to light to indicate the condition of the Monastery during the first three-quarters of the eleventh century. The nuns, according to the story of Abbess Elwina's flight, related in the last chapter, had been driven out by the marauding Danes. This event occurred either at the close of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century. The sisters, no doubt, returned at the earliest possible date and certainly before Cnut ascended the throne in 1017, for Queen Emma, in 1012, when she was still the wife of Ethelred the Unready, gave lands to Romsey. The charter is printed in *Kemble's* Collection, and the words are as follows: "This year (1012) Ælfgyfu (*i.e.*, Elgiva or Emma) gave or bequeathed thæs landæs æt Hwætædunæ into Rummæsigæ Christe and Sanctan Marian." Not only was a return made to Romsey, but by 1016–1025 there was an exceedingly flourishing society in the Convent, consisting of fifty-four nuns. This is proved by the list of their names in the Hyde Register, printed in the preceding chapter.

The Convent may be supposed to have continued in safety for the next forty years and more, since Edward the Confessor (1042–66) made a gift to it of Northuenda, and William the Conqueror confirmed the ancient rights of the Abbey, to which reference is made in a Charter of Henry I:

"I command," says King Henry, "that all the land of the Abbey of Romsey within the bridge of Bradebridge (Broadbridge) may be as quit as her demesne court from all things, and namely from murder, which is demanded in it from the Hundred of Sumburna, as ever it was better quit in the time of William the King, my father, and of my brother, and in my time." This confirmation means that the Abbess had, from early times, a jurisdiction apart from the Hundred Court of King's Somborne, and was privileged to try criminals within her own domain. Another reference to the Conqueror or William Rufus is found in a confirmation of Charters by Henry II: he grants that "the land de la Wycke, which William de Falesia gave to Romsey with his daughter, may be held by the Abbey as freely as it has all its other land, and as it was more quit in the time of King William and in the time of King Henry, my grandfather, and as the Charter of King William testifies."

That the convent, besides carrying on its manorial privileges fully and freely during the eleventh century, was not unmindful of its adornment, may be gathered from two interesting works of sculpture, which have happily survived the wear of time and the destructive fanaticism of image breakers. The remarkable rood, which is now placed in the apse of the south choir aisle, is of Saxon work, and is thought to belong to about the year 1030. It is of Byzantine character, the figure having straight unbent limbs. In addition to the usual attendant figures of the Blessed Virgin and S. John, there are two soldiers standing beneath the Cross, the one having a spear and the other presenting the sponge full of vinegar to the Crucified. In 1742, this rood is described as: "by itself, behind the communion table, on the south wall."

The other work of early sculpture is to be found built into the west wall of the south transept and placed close

SAXON ROOD, SOUTH CHOIR AISLE.

To face p. 36.

to the great entrance from the Cloisters. It depicts the single figure of the Saviour crucified, with the Dextera Dei above. The figure is not quite life-size, and is of the Byzantine pattern, with unbent limbs; the work is of Norman character, and therefore probably belongs to the latter part of the eleventh century. Amongst Mr. Carter's original sketches, now in the MS. Department of the British Museum, there is a representation of this Crucifix slightly coloured. This sketch was made in 1781, and then, as now, part of the right arm was injured. At that time this part of the Churchyard was walled off for a small private burying ground for poor strangers. There is a tradition in Romsey that at one time this corner was let by the Churchwardens to a general dealer, who erected a shed here which covered the rood and may have aided in its preservation. Near the rood is a small cupboard cut out of the stone wall of the transept, with a chimney and aperture of three holes, showing that it was used for a light to be kept continually burning. Many ladies, and some of noble blood, have, in days gone by, bent the knee to their "Supreme Lord" when passing this representation of His Passion on their way to the Church for the Daily Offices. What history the stones around could tell if they had but voices to describe the events which they have witnessed!

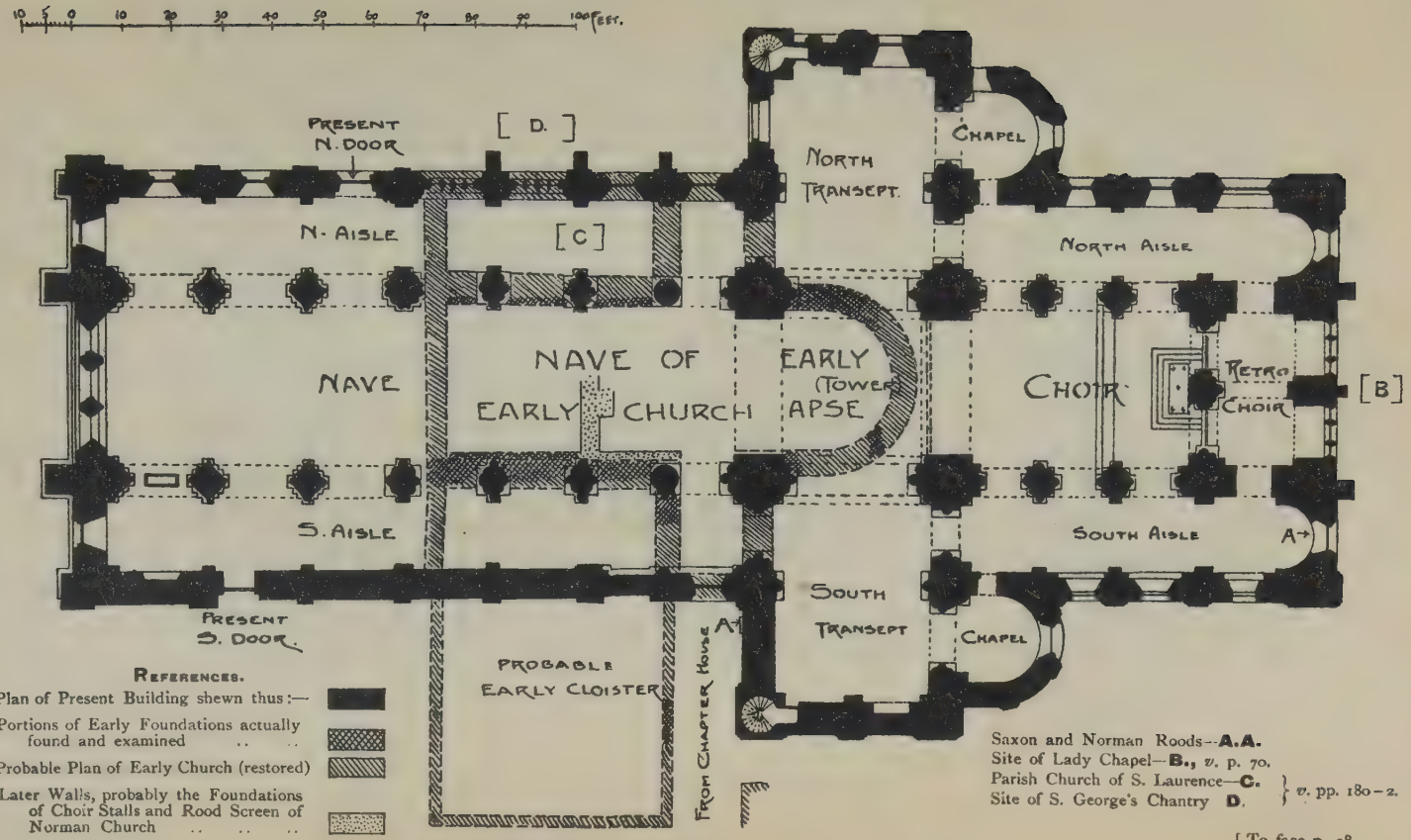
The first of these roods adorned the ancient Saxon church, but what that church was like it is difficult to say. Probably when Edgar re-founded the Monastery in 966–7 a stone church was built. This conjecture leads on to another made by a discovery in 1900, when parts of the tower and nave floors were taken up for repairs. Mr. Peers describes how a great deal of broken building material was found along the line of both nave arcades of the present church. These fragments do not stand alone as indications of an earlier church; the taking up of the floor also

revealed the existence of a fine apse. The foundations of this apse are of a very substantial character, the wall being 4 ft. 9 in. thick. This apse is as wide as the present tower and stands just beneath it. The masonry is said to have "the look of Norman work." Mr. Peers, when examining these fragments, noted that two bays of the south nave aisle are built of masonry of an earlier character than that of the present church, and he suggested that these bays, together with the apse, belong to about the year 1090, when some distinguished members of the old Saxon royal family were resident as inmates of the Convent, and brought, as it is likely, some wealth with them. If the apse is of Norman work it would have been built to take the place of the earlier Saxon square end, either in 1090 or some years earlier. That alterations took place in the arrangement of the Saxon church about 1090 may be inferred from the two early Norman bays mentioned above. The church, before this date, was either Edgar's church as it was first built, or as it was restored after the Danish raid (994–1006). It would have consisted of a plain cruciform church of the Dover or Repton type. Then, with the accession of wealth, the Norman apse was erected in 1090, and the walls of the nave were pierced and aisles added, which would account for the quantity of building material still to be found along the line of the present nave arches.[1]

This restored church continued until the present great church was built around it about 1120, the two bays in the south nave aisle being the only fragments of any account that have survived above ground. Their survival may be due to the fact that the cloisters abutted on them, and that it was found more convenient to incorporate these into the new church than to pull them down.

[1] These conjectures are, of course, uncertain, but the ancient apse may still be seen by lifting a trap door under the present tower.

PLAN OF ROMSEY ABBEY.



[To face p. 38.

In the year 1086, a date made notable by the completion of Domesday, Christina, the daughter of Edmund Ironside, and sister of Edgar Atheling, and of S. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, took the veil at Romsey. Her lands are found in Domesday; one estate in Warwickshire had been held by Earl Eadwine; of another it is said distinctly "Rex dedit Christinæ." This lady has been spoken of by some writers as Abbess of Romsey, but there is no evidence whatever to prove the fact, though her royal descent would make it likely.

Her presence at Romsey opens an interesting chapter in the Abbey history. The two daughters of Malcolm Canmore and the saintly Margaret, the King and Queen of Scotland, Eadgyth (Matilda) and Mary, were sent to their aunt Christina at Romsey to be educated. Eadgyth was born in 1080, her God-father being Earl Robert, who is known to have been in Scotland in the autumn of that year. At what date the young princesses came under the care of their aunt is unknown, but there is little doubt that they were with her in 1093, when Eadgyth would have been about twelve years old. Christina seems to have been severe with the young princesses, and to have used blows if she thought the occasion required it. In a reminiscence of her young days, Eadgyth recalls how, for an act of disobedience, her aunt was accustomed to hurt and disgrace her by sharp blows and detestable taunts. But the education received by these young girls was of a high order, as will appear on a subsequent page. The particular cause, which called down this severe chastisement, was the young princess' refusal to wear a nun's veil, which Christina insisted on placing upon her head as a protection against the rough license of the times.

There is an astounding story of William Rufus, which gives point to Christina's anxiety for her niece. The story as related by Mr. Freeman is as follows:—"When Matilda

was a little more than twelve years old, the Abbess hears that King William has come to see the princess. In the case of any decent King such a visit would surely have been neither scandalous nor wonderful. The King is at the Abbey gate with his knights, and asks to have it opened. The Abbess fears that he may conceive some bad purpose towards the maiden, but hopes that he will respect her if she wears the monastic veil. She therefore persuades Eadgyth to veil for the time. Then, welcoming the King, she invites him to visit her garden and see her roses. The King goes into the cloisters as if to look at the flowers. He sees Eadgyth with the veil, and goes away, showing, according to the Abbess, that his visit had been on her account alone."

The story of the Abbess' anxiety and suspicions, her clever tact, and the evident pleasure she evinces over her success is delightful, if the tale be true; but the author Hermann, though he says he had it from Anselm himself, was a foreigner, and wrote long after the event. "It may be," says Mr. Freeman, "that the Abbess did not know the secrets of the Red King's Court, and reckoned him among ordinary instead of extraordinary sinners. This is, as far as I know, the only time in history or legend in which William Rufus is brought into connexion with any woman. Such a tale must be taken for what it is worth, but the picture of William Rufus contemplating either maidens or roses at least puts him in a light in which we do not meet him elsewhere."

William is known to have been at Winchester in this year, 1093; and the princess' father, King Malcolm, visited Gloucester on 24th August of the same year, and very possibly visited his daughter at Romsey, for both Hermann and a much more trustworthy writer, Eadmer, say that, "seeing her with the veil, he tears it from her head, and

[Photo 1906.

NORMAN ROOD, SITE OF CLOISTER.

See p. 37.

says that he does not mean her to be a nun, but to be the wife of Count Alan," *i.e.*, Count Alan the Black, second Lord of Richmond. The King of Scotland died in the following winter, 13th November, and his saintly Queen a fortnight after, 27th November, and their children were now driven out of the country by the Scottish people. The young princesses, who had probably accompanied their father home on his return from Gloucester, now, with the help of Edgar Atheling, came back to the south to Winchester, or Romsey.

"The story of the Veil," is not however finished; another, and with all his faults, a better man, sought Eadgyth in marriage. The brother of Rufus, the clerkly Henry, was crowned in 1100. He had been the Princess' lover for some time, and his affection was reciprocated, according to the best accounts, and policy went hand in hand with affection. It was no slight advantage if the old Saxon stock could be united with the new Norman house, making one royal family. But there was the difficulty of "the veil." In Archbishop Anselm's words, "If she were a nun she could not marry, if not, she was free." The matter was hotly debated, and Anselm called a council.

In the words of Mr. Freeman,—

"The Archbishop called together at Lambeth, the manor of his friend the Bishop of Rochester, an assembly of bishops, abbotts, nobles, and religious men, before whom he laid the matter, and the evidence bearing on it. There was the evidence of the maiden herself, there was the evidence of two Archdeacons, William of Canterbury and Humbald of Salisbury, whom Anselm had sent to the Monastery, and who, after enquiries among the sisters, reported that there was no ground to think that Eadgyth had ever been a veiled nun. The Archbishop then left the assembly, and the rest, who are spoken of as the Church of England gathered into one place, debated the question in his

absence. Much stress was laid on the case of those women who, in the first days of the conquest, had sought shelter in the cloister from shame and violence, and who had not taken religion (*i.e.*, religious vows) upon themselves. The late Archbishop (Lanfranc) had declared them free to marry, and the judgment of the assembly was that the same rule applied to the case of the daughter of Malcolm. Anselm came back, and the debate and the decision were reported to him. He declared that he assented to the judgment, strengthened as it was by the great authority of Lanfranc. Then Eadgyth herself was brought in, and heard with a pleased countenance all that had passed. She then offered to confirm all that she had said by any form of oath that might be thought good. She did not fear that anyone would disbelieve her, but she wished that no occasion should be left to blaspheme. Anselm told her that no oath was needed, if any man out of the evil treasure of his heart should bring forth evil things, he would not be able to withstand the amount and strength of the evidence by which her cause was proved. He gave her his blessing, and she went forth, as we may say, Lady-elect of the English."

Eadgyth, better known as Matilda, was married on the Feast of S. Martin, the 11th November, 1100, and was crowned at Westminster amidst great popular acclamations. The little pupil of Romsey became Queen of the English for nearly eighteen years, dying 1st May, 1118. Her training had fostered all those good qualities which it is natural to suppose she inherited from her mother, and gave her also an intellectual education of a high order. Mr. Freeman speaks of "her display of scriptural and classical learning" and of "her being mistress of an amount of learning which must have equalled or exceeded that of the King himself." Six of her letters, in Latin, with quotations from Scripture and from classical authors, to the Archbishop, are extant, and may still be read. They exhibit her great love for the saintly Anselm and her earnest desire to bring about agreement between him and the King.

The first letter, written before his exile, contains the Queen's earnest exhortation that he would relax his long fastings. She admits that many of the philosophers by their example invite to a sparing use of food: "Nemo est enim qui ignorat vos legisse Pythagoiae, Socratis, Antisthenis frugalitatem, cæterorumque philosophorum, quos ut enumerare longum est, ita nec praesenti opusculo necessarium." She then turns his thoughts to the grace of the New Law, and declares that Christ Jesus, who consecrated fasting, consecrated also eating, going to the marriage feast, where he turned the water into wine, and to Simon's feast, and to the dinner offered him by Zaccheus. She further enforces her exhortation by reminding him of St. Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "Audi Pater, audi Paulum, Timouthem propter dolorem stomachi vinum bibere suadentem, dicentemque: 'Jam noli aquam bibere, sed modico vino utere.'"

Of another letter, Miss L. Eckenstein says:—"The Queen both read and admired Anselm's writings, and compares his style to that of Cicero, Quintilian, Jerome, Gregory, and others, with whom her reading at Romsey may have made her acquainted." Another letter shows the true affection of the Queen for the great and noble Archbishop, and though in these days the expressions would appear exaggerated they reveal a sincere devotion on the Queen's part. The letter from which the following extract is made was translated by Mrs. Everett Green in her *Letters of Royal Ladies*:—

"To her piously remembered father and worthily reverenced lord, Anselm the Archbishop, Matilda, by the grace of God Queen of England, the least of the handmaidens of his holiness, wishes perpetual health in Christ.

"I give unnumbered thanks to your unceasing goodness, which, not unmindful of me, has condescended, by your letters

presented to me, to show forth your mind though absent. The clouds of sadness in which I was wrapped being expelled, the streamlet of your words has glided through me like a ray of new light.

"I embrace the little parchment sent to me by you as I would my father himself. I cherish it in my bosom: I place it as near my heart as I can. I read over and over again the words flowing from the sweet fountain of your goodness. My heart broods over them, and I hide the pondered treasures in the very secret place of my heart."

Many benefited by Matilda's liberality, and if there was a touch of vanity and extravagance, these do not destroy her real goodness of character. "Her brother David, not an undevout prince, went so near to a scoff as to ask his sister whether King Henry would care to kiss the lips which had kissed the ulcers of the lepers." An extravagant act possibly on her part, but extravagant goodness has a necessary place in an age of rough manners and coarse life. She did much for the country in building bridges—a benefit of great public importance in those days. Together with the King she showed great interest in the monasteries, an interest returned with gratitude on their part. St. Alban's was restored in 1115, and a portrait of the Queen is found in the celebrated Golden book of that Abbey. She founded the Leper Hospital of St. Giles in the East in 1101. Abingdon Abbey provided her with a retreat during her confinement, where she received the care of a celebrated leech, Abbott Faricius.

Nor was Romsey neglected. The King was here in 1105, and again in 1110 or 1114, "the year in which his daughter was given to the Emperor." There are seven charters of Henry I to the Abbey. The first runs as follows:—

"I have granted to God and the Blessed Mary of Romsey and Matilda the Queen, my wife, one fair by the year, that is to say, on

[Photo 1906.

CARVING.—SOUTH CHOIR AISLE.

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[See p. 50.

the Festival of S. Athelfleda the Virgin, which fair shall last four days, and begin the 15th day after the Feast of S. Denis, and I grant to her sac and soc and toll and team, and infangenethef with all her other customs, and I grant them to have my firm peace in going and returning from the fair. And besides this I grant to her fully a market every Sunday, with the aforesaid customs. Witness, Robert Earl of Mellent, and Eustace the Earl, and Urso de Abetot at Wyncestra."

By the second deed Stephen, son of Arard, is permitted to put 20*s.* worth of land with his daughter into the Abbey, and he gives a fourth part of the mill at Todyntona (Totton, near Redbridge) and one virgate of land of Rige (*i.e.*, Ridge) and two parts of the tithe of Wycebia. Witness, Wald' the Chancellor and Eudo Dapifer and Geoffrey the Chamberlain at Lutegarshale. Another charter commands Roger Bishop of Salisbury, Walter Hosato and all the barons of Wilteschir to see to the peaceable possession by the Abbess of the lands and mills which Ernulp Desthuite gave with his daughter. This probably refers to Wiltshire property. Of another Wiltshire property, once held of Romsey Abbey by William Escuet, it is ordered henceforth to be held in demesne by the Convent, the said William having relinquished it on placing his daughters in the Abbey. The last of this series of charters, one giving the Convent the right to plough their lands, is interesting because the Queen herself witnessed it; the other witness being Humphrey de Bohun. It was attested at Winchester. Some of the witnesses to these charters occur in Abingdon Charters about 1105 and 1110; it is therefore probable that these also were granted in the early years of King Henry's reign.

Though the records are scanty, it may certainly be gathered that Romsey Monastery flourished at this period. It possessed wide lands and received additions to its wealth, it enjoyed the favour of kings and welcomed royal

personages within its walls, it was a home of learning and of good deeds, a fitting place for the education of the young, after a high standard. Nor were the improvements of the buildings nor the management of its business affairs neglected. The eleventh, with the early years of the twelfth century, saw the golden age of the monasteries, and Romsey shared the privileges and fulfilled the duties belonging to the time.

The Queen, Matilda the Good, died on the 1st of May, 1118, and an extract from Henry of Huntingdon, eulogising her character, may fittingly bring this chapter to a close :—

Tunc quoque Matildis luce caruit de cujus facetia et morum prærogativa dictum est :—

"Prospera non lætam fecere, nec aspera tristem,
Aspera risus ei, prospera terror erant.
Non decor effecit fragilem, non sceptra superbam
Sola patens humilis, sola pudica decens.
Maii prima dies, nostrarum nocte dierum
Raptam, perpetua fecit inesse die."

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CHAPTER IV.

A.D. 1118—1219.

PRINCESS MARY OF BLOIS.

"Lest the impetuous presumption of the fraudulent king (*i.e.* Henry II) should inflict violent injury upon you."—*Princess Mary's Letter to Louis VII of France*, A.D. 1168.

Chapter IV.

PRINCESS MARY OF BLOIS.

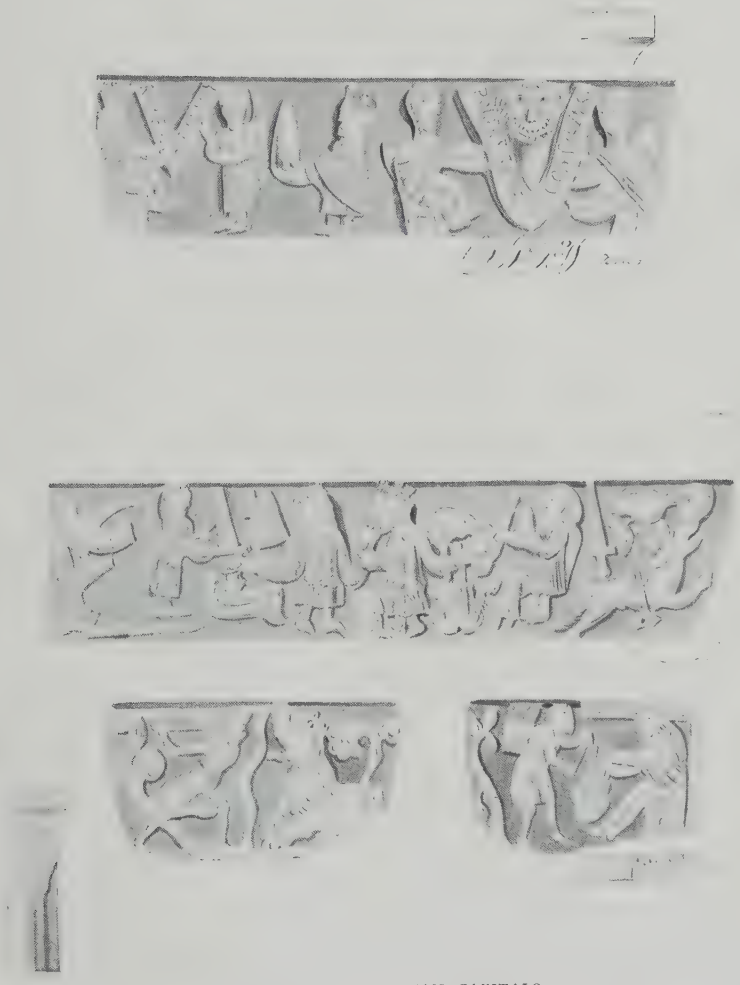
THE great Abbey Church, which has survived from Norman times down to the present day, attracts all lovers of ecclesiastical architecture. This attractive character of the Church is enhanced by the mystery which hangs about its origin. A visitor, who is moved to admiration by the massive grandeur and perfect proportion of the building, asks how it came to be erected, and who found the money for providing the sisters with so costly a sanctuary. No very clear answer can be given. There are no surviving fabric rolls, and even the register of the Abbey deeds, which might have afforded some information, is lost or destroyed.

It is generally said nowadays that the work was begun at the east end *circa* 1120, and that this new work was built round the older church whilst the latter was still standing. Perhaps King Henry I initiated the building of this great Church. He and the good Queen Maud had been great benefactors of monasteries during her lifetime. What would be more natural than that he should, on her death, promote the building of a new and magnificent church for the convent in which his Queen had been educated? The Queen had died in 1118, and she may have expressed some wish about the matter, and Henry may have found a pleasure in promoting this desire after her death.

The curiously carved capital on the north side of the south choir aisle depicts several figures, one that of a king holding what looks like a church, another with a chevron on which is carved several words. This inscription, however, seems only to refer to the architect or mason, and is as follows:—"**Robert me fecit.**" Another chevron is inscribed with the words:—"**Robert tute consule ^{x} d.s.**" The carving on the corresponding capital in the north aisle is equally curious and enigmatical. Here are two kings engaged in a bloody warfare, and restrained from further slaughter by the interposition of angels. These capitals afford a delightful subject for speculation on the part of the curious-minded, but it is difficult to find any satisfactory solution. If they were carved as soon as this part of the Church was completed the King represented in the south choir aisle might be Henry I, but it must be borne in mind that the carving may be later than the capital. Mr. E. Loftus Brock, in the *Builder* for 5th October, 1895, says:—

"There is a good deal of early carving on the caps of the eastern portions which deserves careful attention from the fact that it contrasts with much that has been executed at a little later period. The stonework was in fact gone over again by a later carver, and much that had been left in the form of plain cushion capitals was transformed into carving. Of this work are the capitals with the name 'Robert.'"

The building of this great Church must have occupied some considerable space of time. The western wall of the south transept is a little later than the general work in the eastern part of the building, the delay being caused by the older conventual buildings which could not at first be displaced. It is thought also that a pause, and this time a longer one, was made at the west of the crossing beyond the great tower, and that the round pillars in the nave indicate



CARVINGS ON NORMAN CAPITALS.

South and North Choir Aisles.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 50.]

a fresh start in building operations. These pillars have been compared with work in Christ Church, Oxford, which was carried out during the years 1160 to 1180, at which latter date the Cathedral was consecrated.

It may be that the advent of King Stephen's daughter —the Princess Mary, *circa* 1155—brought the means, and gave a fresh impetus to building operations. In any case the erection of the pure Norman work covered a good many years, before the transitional work of the nave clerestory was entered upon. This transitional work from Norman to Early English was carried out during the Abbacy of Juliana (1171–1199), the date usually given for it being *circa* 1180. This work is to be found chiefly in the clerestory of the four eastern bays of the nave, but "the westernmost of these bays also indicates in the triforium, by an increase of mouldings, the limit of the Norman work and the beginning of the Transitional." It has been remarked of the first bay of the clerestory next the tower, on the south side, that "it has a pointed arch enriched with the chevron," which is the only one so ornamented, "as if the architect, in abandoning the ancient forms, was anxious to preserve some of the characteristic features to which he had been accustomed." The further development of the great Church in the Early Pointed or Early English style will be referred to in the next chapter.

The Abbess or Abbesses who presided over the convent during the earlier years, when the new buildings began to rise above ground, are unknown. If Christina (*circa* 1090) was not Abbess at the close of the eleventh century, there is a gap in the list of Abbesses for a period of about 100 years. A certain Hadewisa is spoken of in 1130 as then Abbess. The reference occurs in a grant of a corrody, or allowance in food or money, to the monastic house of S. Denys, Southampton. The original deed is preserved

in the Public Record Office, and has a seal attached, of which an illustration is given. "The seal" is described as "of red wax, about 2 in. in length and 1½ in. in breadth, and represents a female standing in the habit of a nun. In her right hand she holds a long staff, and in her left a book which she clasps to her breast." This figure may represent the patron, S. Æthelfleda. The inscription is simply **"Sigil. S. Marie Romes."** In this grant Hadewisa speaks of the Canons of S. Denys as "fratribus nostris et beneficiorum nostrorum participibus," and grants one full portion of food and drink such as was provided for a sister. In return the brethren were to pray for the welfare of the living and the repose of the dead in Christ. The names of two witnesses are attached—Berengarius and Rodbertus.

Another grant of this lady, hitherto overlooked, is found in the Edington Register, and relates to the Abbey's property in Wiltshire. The Abbess and Convent concede to Herlewin a hide of land with pasture formerly inclosed by Alricius next the monastery of Bradley. Part lay in Essetona (*i.e.* Steeple Ashton) and part in Ethenduna (*i.e.* Edington). He is also permitted to rent a further piece of land at ten shillings, and for pannage of hogs to pay a hog or sixteen pence. The list of witnesses is the most interesting part of the document, as amongst them have survived the names of certain Romsey clergy of this early date: "Four presbyters, Robert, John, Roger, Edmund, Gilbert the deacon, Peter, scriptor of S. Albans, Henry clericus, Richard and William Sermonicatores, Roger Palmer, Ralf Dispensator, Edwin de Essefalde, Edwin cocus (Cook), William-Armiger of Berengarius, Wlpardus-Armiger of Herlewyn, and clericuli (Clergy in Minor Orders) of Rumesy, Philip, Walter, Osbert, and the other Osbert, Nicholas."

CONVENT SEAL, A.D. 1130.

[S. Æthelflæda.]

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During the next twenty-five years (1130–1155) the dearth of information continues. A Matilda succeeded Hadewisa, but from what families these ladies came it is impossible to say, the early Abbesses being seldom, if ever, distinguished by the addition of a surname. The grants of the King are the only sources of information, and they tell next to nothing. King Stephen confirmed to the Abbey its Wiltshire property, and the charter makes mention of Wernesdon, *i.e.* Wherwellsdon, the name of a Hundred near Devizes. This Hundred is overlooked by the white horse cut in the turf of Westbury down. It included the manors of Edington, Steeple Ashton, and others which the convent possessed by the gift of King Edgar. The Abbess of Romsey was Lady of the whole Hundred, and exercised large powers over the population as well as over the property. The name comes, it is said, from Hár-welles-dûn, implying that the Lord of the Hundred held his court by a hoar or ancient well-on-a-down.

Henry II gave no less than fourteen Charters to Romsey, but they are all undated, and the witnesses afford little help in ascertaining the exact occasion on which they were given ; most of them, however, would seem to belong to the early part of the reign. Besides confirmations of the Wiltshire property there occurs amongst these deeds a reference, and for the first time, to a Gloucestershire property called Hunlaneseta, now Hunlacy. It had belonged to the Abbey, so runs the Charter, in the time of Henry I. There is no mention of it in Domesday as part of the Abbey's lands, and it may have come into the convent's possession with the advent of a sister, as was the case with a property mentioned in Henry I's Charter, referred to in the last chapter. Hunlacy lies due east of Cirencester, and can be identified by the church of Cotes, of which the Abbey held the advowson.

In another Charter King Henry II confirms to the Abbey "that hide of land de la Wycke which William de Falesia gave to it with his daughter." The wording of the document seems to imply that this land came to the convent in the time of King William. In Domesday William de Falesia appears as holding half a hide of land, of the King, in Stannings, Wiltshire. He also held manors in Dorset, Devon, and Somerset. His wife was a daughter of Serbo de Burci, who held an estate at Domerham under the Abbot of Glastonbury.

In this series of charters mention is made by the King of "Mary my kinswoman"; she is further spoken of as Abbess, and the King gives special protection to the Abbey of Romsey over which she presides. This Mary was the youngest of King Stephen's daughters, and the darling both of her father and mother, and was dedicated by them to the monastic life from very early years. Her birth took place about 1136, and she was, when old enough, placed in the Convent of S. Leonard's at Stratford-at-Bow, the Manor of Lillechurch in Kent being given for her support. Several sisters were brought over from S. Sulpice at Bourges to be her attendants; but quarrels arose with the English sisters over the harshness of the discipline, and Stephen called together an assembly consisting of Archbishop Theobald, the Bishop of Chichester, the Abbot of Faversham, and others. It was decided to take away the Manor of Lillechurch from St. Leonard's and form it into a separate priory, over which the young Princess should preside. "Her affectionate and amiable mother, Queen Maud, did not," writes Mrs. Green, "long live to lavish proofs of tenderness on this her only surviving daughter; and her death which took place in 1151 deprived Mary of a support of which she afterwards stood in much need." Queen Maud was daughter of the

Mary, who, with her sister, Matilda, Queen of Henry I, had been brought up in Romsey Convent by their aunt Christina at the close of the previous century. The grandmother, Mary, had been a pupil at Romsey, and now, for some reason unknown, either her father, King Stephen, or Henry II brought the grandchild Mary to the same convent. The exact date cannot be proved, but if Mrs. Green is correct in saying that she was some time in the convent before becoming its Abbess, she must have removed there before 1155, when Abbess Matilda died.

The Princess was not left long to enjoy the peace of her convent life. In 1159–60 her brother William, Count of Boulogne, died, and, as heiress of the property, she was a prize worth seizing. At the instigation it would seem of King Henry II, Matthew of Alsace, youngest son of Theodoric, Count of Flanders, sought her as his bride, and in spite of the strenuous opposition of Thomas à Becket, carried her off. It was a scandalous proceeding, but with the King against her, and with no relatives now surviving to defend her honour or to support her resistance, it may well be doubted if she was a willing instrument. The whole matter was insistently pressed, and very likely suddenly disclosed to her, and she was too young and inexperienced, in the turmoil of the moment, to protect herself. But she never forgot Henry's unkindness, and some years later, in a letter to the King of France warning him of the coming of Henry's emissaries, she speaks in no measured terms of her cousin the King of England. Here are the Princess' words written to Louis the VIIth in 1168:—

"Let it be known to your Highness that Henry, King of England, has sent his ambassadors to the Emperor. The returning ambassadors passed through my territories, and I spoke with them, and well I perceived from their words that the English

King ceases not day nor night to devise mischief against you. Wherefore I thought it fitting to send to your Grace and to give you the necessary forewarning that you may take counsel with your wise men and act as is most fitting, lest the *impetuous presumption of the fraudulent King* should inflict violent injury upon you."

Mary was married in 1161 ; she was joyfully received by her own people as their young Countess, and became endeared to them not only by reason of her blood, but also by her kindly nature inherited from her mother.

The feud between Becket and her husband continued, and various efforts were made to separate the couple, but without success. Indeed Becket complains that in going abroad his life was in danger, owing to Matthew's anger with him.

At last, after ten years of married life, Matthew and Mary agreed to separate, the former having been much stirred by a speech of the Emperor Frederick I. This is Mrs. Green's account :—

"During the feasting that took place on the marriage of Matthew's sister Margaret with Baldwin, Earl of Hainault, and in which he bore a part, the Emperor Frederic I., was present, and at table in the midst of the assembled guests he dilated upon the enormity of Earl Matthew's conduct towards the Lady Mary, declaring that no man of respectability ought to associate with him.

"Earl Theodoric, his father, had on his dying bed severely reproved him for his fault, and this remonstrance, disregarded at the time, now rushed upon his recollection. He returned home, and, having with many penitential expressions asked forgiveness from his wife, gave his full consent for her to return to the cloister."

Mary retired to the monastery of S. Austreberthe at Montreuil about 1169–1170, and died in 1182 at the early

age of forty-five years, leaving two daughters, Ida, the elder, who was first married to Gerard, Earl of Gueldres, and, becoming a widow after a few months, was re-married to Reginald, Count of Damartin. She as the elder daughter inherited her mother's property. Maud, the younger daughter, was married to Henry I, Duke of Brabant. Both these daughters were legitimatized, and had the recognition of the Papacy, showing that the scandal was forgiven. The story is a pitiable one, and the more so, because the victim seems to have been of a particularly sweet and noble disposition.

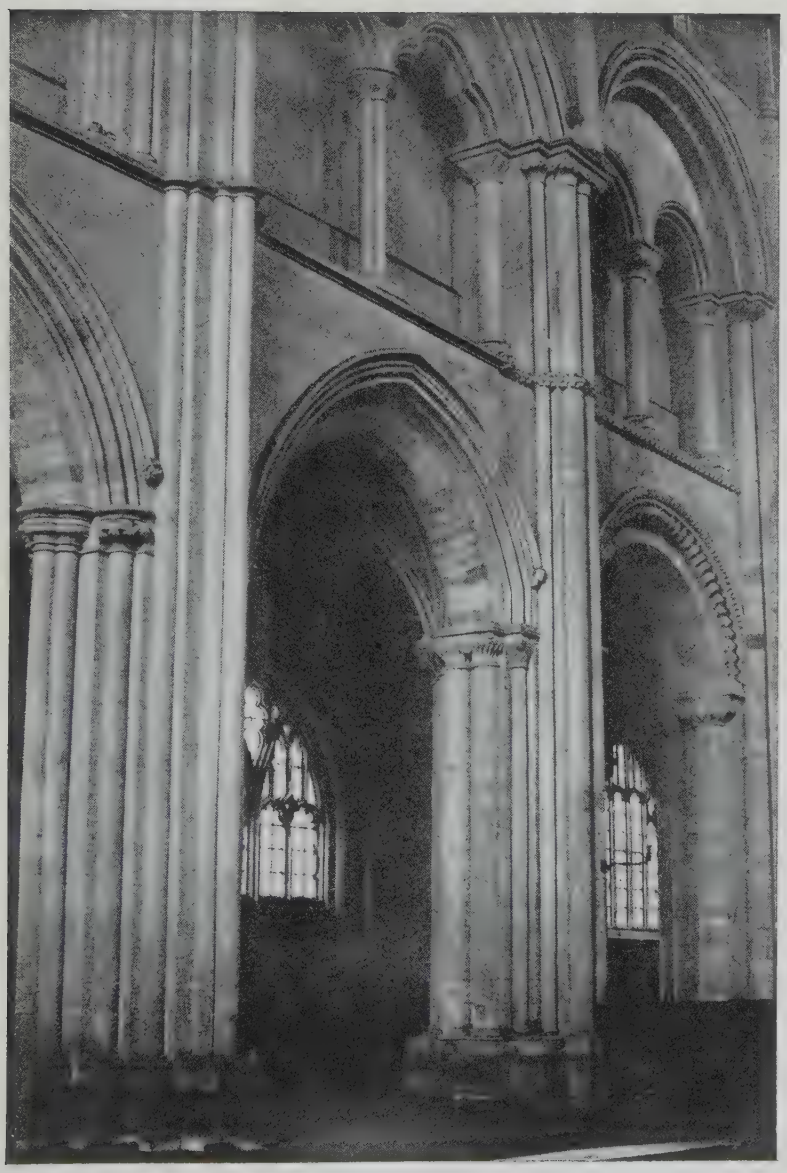
The name of the Lady Mary's successor at Romsey is not recorded, unless it may be taken for granted that Juliana was elected immediately after the abduction of her youthful predecessor. Juliana was certainly presiding over the convent as early as 1174, and perhaps as early as 1171. This is proved by a deed executed between her and one Richard, son of Michael, son of Herlwin, relating to lands and a tenement which his father, Michael, held of the Abbey in Semmetonia, and to lands in Essetonia, Ethedonia (Ashton and Edingdon) and Bradelea, and for which, amongst other services, he gave one sextus of honey at the feast of the patron S. Æthelfleda. Amongst the witnesses to this deed there occurs the Archdeacon of Winchester, Ralph, who filled that office from 1171 to 1174. There is nothing impossible in the suggestion that Juliana immediately succeeded the Lady Mary, though her rule would in that case have been a long one, extending over nearly forty years, 1160 to 1199, in which latter year she died.

There is another deed of this Abbess, preserved in the Winchester Cathedral Chartulary, Part III, No. 502, in which Juliana and the Convent of the Church of S. Mary of Romeseye confirm land to one William Terstwade in

Testwade and ly Wada as his ancestors held it, and here again one sextus of honey is mentioned as part of the service rendered to the Abbey. Another deed in the same collection contains a grant by J. (probably Juliana), Abbess of Romsey, to a Richard de Testwode, of the Mill at Totyngton (*i.e.*, Totton). Other members of the family "de Testwode" are to be found in documents relating to Romsey for 150 years or more.

It was during Juliana's abbacy that King Henry II caused nuns to be brought from Fontevrault. This event took place in 1176–7, and the cost mentioned in the Pipe Roll is £2. 8*s.* 6*d.*, a sum which must be multiplied by at least forty to obtain a comparison with the present day value of money. The Abbey of Fontevrault, which combined in one establishment a house of monks and a house of nuns, both under an abbess' rule, was situate some ten miles south-east of Saumur on the river Loire, and became the last resting place of Henry II and Richard I. About the same time the King also brought nuns from Fontevrault to the convent at Amesbury and expelled some of the nuns there. The fact that French sisters were brought to Romsey is just one of the many tantalizing fragments of the Abbey's history which quickens the imagination without satisfying it. Was there some ill will against the Crown smouldering in the convent in consequence of Henry's brutal treatment of the Princess Mary? but this was a grievance sixteen years old. Was there a lack of novices seeking profession? but this seems hardly likely at so early a date. Perhaps these two possible causes may be combined, and the conjecture may be hazarded that the convent had lost something of its reputation and attractiveness through the scandal of Abbess Mary's abduction.

Two other charters of Abbess Juliana may be worth



[Photo, c. 1860.

NAVE ARCADE AND NORTH AISLE.

Junction of Norman and Pointed Work. [The window on right has disappeared.]

To face p. 58.]

[See p. 51.

a reference. The first, dated 1183, deals with a farm granted to Richard Ruffus, or le Rous, the King's chamberlain. The family, of which he was a member, was connected with Immere or Imber in Wilts for several centuries, and had frequent dealings with the convent. The witnesses to this deed include Robert Elemosinarius (Almoner), and Alanus and Ranulphus, "our chaplains." The other charter relates to half a hide of land in Edyndon granted to Robert de Fonte. It had been held by his grandfather Alwardus. A Robertus Medicus (Doctor) occurs amongst the witnesses. His name is a familiar one in deeds of this date, relating to Romsey, and in some of them he is described as of Ashton, *i.e.*, Steeple Ashton, Wilts.

No further information is to be had concerning Abbess Juliana who died in February, 1199, and was succeeded by Abbess Matilda Patric, the sister or half-sister of Walter Walerand. During this lady's abbacy King John built a house at Romsey, which after his death was granted to the convent for a farm within the Abbey, 9th November, 1221.

The King paid several visits to Romsey. On Monday, 28th February, 1200, he came there from Portsmouth and on the following Wednesday proceeded to Winchester. On the 21st April, 1206, he sent Godfrey Ruffus to Romsey with thirteen palfreys and six grooms, with two sumpter horses and their attendant, and commanded the warden of the Abbey to see that proper care was taken of the horses. On Friday, the 22nd of January, 1210, the King again visited Romsey, travelling from Cranborne. He remained there on Saturday, and perhaps longer, the next place mentioned in his itinerary being Marlborough, which he reached on the 28th of the same month. He spent the 11th of February at Ashley, and returned to Romsey on Friday, the 12th.

It is not without interest to notice that Christiana de Rumesey was nurse to his daughter, the Princess Johanna, and that the Mayor and others of Winchester had to make a provision of two pence a day for her, 9th August, 1213. The Winchester folk seem to have fallen into arrears in the payment of this allowance, for in 1218–19 Henry III orders them to pay £6. 1*s.* 8*d.* for two years, and refers to a debt of £66. 12*s.* 6*d.* The convent, possibly owing to these personal relations with the King, seems to have favoured his cause, for as late as 29th of August, 1216, more than a year after he had been forced to sign Magna Carta, and within a few months of his death, the King orders that the Abbess and Convent shall have possession of the lands belonging to those of their tenants who are the King's enemies, and have kept back their rents due to the Abbey.

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CHAPTER V.

A.D. 1219—1298.

THE 13th CENTURY ABBESSES.

"It is needful to enclose the garden (*i.e.*, the convent) by the defence of shrewd and sharp discipline, as the Paradise of God was enclosed by angelic care and the flaming sword."

ARCHBISHOP PECKHAM'S *Injunctions.*

Chapter V.

THE 13th CENTURY ABBESSES.

THE Records of Romsey during the reign of Henry III relate rather to external than to internal affairs, and deal with the appointment of officers, with grants from the Crown and Manor privileges. The Episcopal Registers, from which some idea might be obtained as to the internal life of the Convent and the character of the Abbesses, are not available till the close of the century.

A slight sketch is alone possible, and this is the more to be regretted because the 13th century witnessed the close of the golden age of the monastic life, and it would have been of great interest to know how Romsey fared, and whether the Convent maintained that high excellence, as an educational establishment, which was its proud possession in the time of Christina and her niece, the Princess Matilda.

When the century opened Matilda Patric[1] was still Abbess, and during the fifty-six years of Henry's reign there were, including this lady, eight Abbesses who ruled over the house. They followed in quick succession, Matilda Patric dying in 1218–19 was followed by an unnamed Matilda (1219–30), whose successor was Matilda de Barbfle (1230–37); then came Isabel de Nevill for about a year

[1] This lady is called Paric in the Patent Roll, and Patriz in the Annales Monastici.

(1237–38), and she was succeeded by Cecilia (1238–47); the Prioress Constance was the next Abbess (1247–60), and after a vacancy of some six months, during which time William de Axemuth held the Abbey as the King's Escheator, Amicia de Sulhere, who had been Prioress, received the abbatial staff, 16th May—6th June, 1261, and continued as ruler for some seven years, when Alicia Walerand was appointed, 11th—28th July, 1268. So many changes in the government of a large establishment like Romsey could not at any time have made for efficiency, and still less at a time when a change was passing over the whole monastic system. There are signs towards the close of the century, when the Episcopal Visitations begin, that the discipline of Romsey Abbey had grown lax, and warnings, though lovingly, were sternly given.

Little is known about the six Abbesses between Matilda Patric and Alice Walerand, indeed it has not been a simple matter to recover the names and dates of some of these ladies. Matilda the unnamed and Matilda de Barbfle came to light in searching a printed calendar of the Patent Roll, or roll containing the Crown's mandates open and public to all. Isabel and Constance are to be found in the Patent and also in the Close Roll, or register of letters closed or sealed up and directed to individuals, but the rolls for these years have not yet been printed.[1] Abbess Constance has been known for many years from her seal, of which an illustration is given, but four of these ladies' names have never been printed in any Romsey handbook; they are the Matilda unnamed, Matilda de Barbfle, Isabel de Nevill, and Cecilia. The story of the fortunate recovery of the name and date of this latter lady may perhaps be worth the telling, as it shows that perseverance in a search of this kind is always worth while, in spite of many disappointments.

[1] The Patent Rolls for 1232–47 have now been printed.

SEAL OF VICAR NICHOLAS
DE SANCTO BOTULPHO.

A.D. 1354-49.

See p. 168.]

SEAL OF ABBESS CONSTANCE.

A.D. 1247-61.

To face p. 64.]

The name Cecilia came to light in studying a 14th century MS. (B. M., Lansd. 442), which is a beautifully written book or register of deeds, relating in part to the Abbey's Wiltshire property. This register was made by the Monks of Edington, who in the 14th century succeeded to some of the property and entered into possession of the church there. In this collection there is a deed mentioning Cecilia, but without a date; there are, however, the names of a number of witnesses appended which proved that she was Abbess in the earlier half of the 13th century, but her exact place was still unknown. Further light came from an old and interesting deed, relating to the Rector of Edington and the Rector of St. Laurence, or Parish Church of Romsey. There had been a long continued dispute about a tithe in Wiltshire, and John, the Rector of Edington, and Adam, the Rector of Romescy, together with the Abbess, petitioned the Bishop of Salisbury to step in and settle the matter. He did so, and the deed was sealed with the seals of the Bishop, Abbess, Convent, and of the two Rectors, but best of all the date was added, 1241. This document did not, however, give the exact date of Cecilia's appointment, and whilst her predecessor and successor both occur in the Close Roll as having the King's confirmation, there is no mention of Abbess Cecilia. A study of the Rolls suggests an explanation—one of them is missing, and this is for the year 1238, which may therefore be taken as the probable date of her appointment.

A missing link still remained; in the deed of the rectors the lady is named merely as Abbess C., and though the witnesses in the deed of the Edington register included the Rectors John and Adam, yet C. might have stood for another Abbess, but happily a third MS. turned up and clinched the whole matter; it was dated 1244, and spoke of the Abbess by her full name Cecilia.

Most of these ladies had dealings with the Crown, and were recipients of royal favours. Henry the III was born at Winchester, and loved his birthplace, spending much of his time there, as the city found to its cost. Living in the neighbourhood, it is not surprising to find that, like his father, King John, he visited Romsey, or that he favoured it with gifts. Early in his reign the house which King John had built at Romsey, probably for a hunting box, was granted to the Abbess for a farm. On the occasion of Henry's visit there, on 15th March, 1231, a month or two after Matilda de Barbfle's appointment, he granted five oaks from Milchet Wood, *ad planchias faciendas*, for the repair of the dormitories.

Isabel de Nevill was favoured with a gift of five New Forest bucks to celebrate her installation, 21st May, 1237, and the King acquitted a rent due to the Crown at Easter by reason of the late vacancy of the Abbey, which rent was used to pay the debt of the Abbey; this favour was given on 13th July. Though thirty abbesses at least presided over this establishment between Edgar's new foundation in 967 and the suppression of the Monasteries in the 16th century, on no other occasion is there any surviving record of a King's gift for an abbess's feast, or indeed of a feast being held, though no doubt it was the usual custom on the appointment of a new head of the house.

Under Cecilia the Abbey owed the Crown, or rather the Bishopric, which was in the King's hands at the time, £10 for corn (1239), a sum equal to some £240 in these days, and this rather considerable sum was remitted. Six New Forest oaks for timber came into the hands of the Sacrist 24th June, 1251, and two years later sixteen oaks from the same place were given for the fabric of the church (21st June, 1253). After this the record of gifts ceases

until the closing years of the reign, when Henry grants six more oaks, this time from Clarendon Forest (20th Nov., 1271), and closes his presents with a cask of wine, 10th May, 1272.

No great demands were made upon the Abbey for these royal favours, so far as the surviving records show, with the exception of an order to take in a lady, one Matilda Waler and her handmaid, and to provide them with necessaries. The most trying part of this command being found in its closing words: "during the life time of the said Matilda;" for the abbey's sake it is to be hoped that she was not a young woman. The only other demand occurs when the King kept Christmastide at Winchester in 1268, Romsey, together with Southampton, Andover, Newbury, and Alresford, are to provide bread. Judging by the number of places called upon, the company which, with retainers and servants, gathered at the Royal Court on this occasion must have been a large one.

Another matter, and one of a rather more public character, came under the consideration of the Crown during this reign. Matilda Patric, *sister* or half-sister of Walter Walerand died sometime between 28th October, 1218, and 27th October, 1219. With her death the gallows ceased to be used and fell to the ground, nor was it brought into use again for fifty years or more. It is impossible now to explain why this disuse obtained. Perhaps the Abbesses who followed Matilda were more religious and less secular-minded, and attended rather to the Convent life and the Abbey buildings than to the conservation of manorial privileges and the care of their estates.

But the privilege of trying criminals was not generally despised. In his *History of Hampshire*, the late Mr. Shore says:—

"Many places in Hampshire had the right of holding a Court Leet in addition to the Manor Court. This privilege was highly valued by the lords of Manors. It relieved them from certain obligations in connection with the hundred Courts held by the sheriff of the County or his deputy. A Manor which had a Court Leet could make its own arrangements for the assize of bread and ale, appoint its own ale-taster, and the lord of such a Manor usually had also the right of freegallows. So many gibbets existed in various parts of Hampshire at one time, that malefactors could not travel many miles without coming across one or more of these reminders of the law, from which the whitened bones of some criminal were perhaps hanging."

At Romsey, when the tithe map was made, in 1845, there was a Gallows mead on the north-west side of the town, situate a third of the way up the Burnt Mill stream or the middle stream above the mills in Mill Lane, and this may indicate the site of the ancient place of execution.

A few other benefits of a public character were received from the Crown during the last six years of Henry's reign. On the 18th of July, 1266, a market on Wednesdays and a fair of three days, lasting from the Vigil to the morrow of the Nativity of the B. V. M. (September 8th) was granted at Ashton, *i.e.*, Steeple Ashton in Wiltshire. Two years later (10th July, 1268) all the ancient charters of the Abbey were overhauled, inspected and confirmed, fresh copies being made, because as is explained :—"We find the charters worn away by age and not durable, and are not willing that the well-beloved in Christ, the Abbess and nuns of Romsey, there serving and for ever to serve God and the Blessed Mary and S. Ethelfleda should suffer loss or damage." This was the year of the great storm at Winchester, a storm which no doubt included Romsey in the havoc wrought in the neighbourhood.

Whilst there is not much evidence as to the maintenance or increase of manorial rights in the early part of the

[J. Buckler, 1806.

THE EAST END.

Broadlands Collection.

[J. Buckler. 1806.

THE WEST END.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 68.]

reign, the Church proves that there was much activity going on about the buildings. The transition from Norman to Early Pointed work is to be dated during the reigns of Henry II and Richard I. The Transitional work in Romsey Abbey, as described in the previous chapter, had been carried out whilst Juliana was Abbess (1171–99). Then after a considerable interval, building operations were again taken in hand, and the great church was finally completed by the erection of the very beautiful lancets at the west end. This window, together with the last bays of the nave, are of Early Pointed work, a style which prevailed throughout the reign of Henry III. There is a fine capital, in the north-west door, of this style, dated by Rickman as of about the year 1240, and a string course of 1250, according to Parker.

It is not without significance that, as has been already seen, a good deal of timber was given by the King to the Convent, and the gifts extend throughout the reign. The dormitories were repaired in 1230, sixteen oaks were given specifically for the fabric of the church in 1253, the Sacrist receiving six just two years earlier. The Early Pointed work may therefore be dated *circa* 1240–60, which include the Abbacies of Cecilia and Constance. Some of the timber may have been used for the final roofing of the nave, and in any case there is ample evidence of building activity, both in the church and about the conventual buildings at this time.

After a few years interval the eastern end of the church was taken in hand ; a desire for more light, as well as for the more graceful ornamentation of this part of the church, may have been the moving cause of the undertaking. The heavy Norman triforium and clerestory were removed, and an exceedingly handsome window with bar tracery was inserted. At about the same time, or soon after, the Lady

Chapel was rebuilt ; the gift by the Crown of six Clarendon Forest oaks, in 1271, should indicate the date of the work.

There had been a Norman Lady Chapel up to this time, which now gave place to one of more graceful pattern and enlarged design. The windows, which now occupy the old entrance into the chapel, are formed of geometrical tracery of the earlier pattern of the Decorated style, and are spoken of by Mr. Loftus Brock in the *Builder* as thirteenth century work. These windows were inserted in their present position when the Lady Chapel was pulled down, shortly after the suppression of the monastery, and when the great church, with a twenty-four foot ambulatory, was sold by the Crown to the townsfolk.

The late Vicar of Romsey, the Rev. E. L. Berthon, who with extraordinary skill lowered and restored these windows without taking them to pieces, examined the foundations of the Lady Chapel in 1866. He discovered a concrete floor and the foundations of a forty foot building extending into Mr. Curtis' garden, with bases and responds of the corner columns, corresponding with those on the face of the church. He also found the base of the central column for the support of the groining of the roof. There were capitals lying about which were placed in the nave of the church.

But Mr. Berthon did more ; he pierced the concrete floor, and at a depth of twelve inches he came upon the floor of the earlier Norman chapel with tooth-pattern tiles of that period ; he gave the dimensions of this chapel as 21 ft. by 25 ft., or only half the length of the later one. He says that this chapel was two steps below the rest of the church, and that the remains therein point to two altars corresponding to the double arched entrance, and thus agreeing with a double dedication in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Ethelfleda. It may be that the visit

[Photo 1906.

THE EAST END, AND SITE OF LADY CHAPEL.

To face p. 70.]

of King Edward I for two days, the 28th and 29th of January, 1275, marks the consecration of the new and beautiful Lady Chapel.

It is a matter of great regret that more evidence has not survived to show the details of the work and the means by which the convent was enabled to complete and improve this magnificent building, which so deeply impresses every lover of architecture by its harmonious proportions.

The male officers of the monastery must have played an important part in forwarding these building operations as well as in the dealings of the convent with the outer world, whether with architect, workmen, tenants, or crown officials. Amongst the convent officials the seneschal or steward would have been the most important. One of these, Walter de Acle, lived in the time of Abbess Matilda, probably Matilda Patric (1199–1219). Another, Savaric de Cinnoc, was steward under one of her successors, and Walter de Romesey under Matilda de Barbfle (1231). The last-named was a person of importance; he had appeared in court as attorney for Abbess Matilda in 1219, and witnessed a deed between the Abbess and one Michael de Cantertone, probably a few years later. He was an itinerant justice of Southampton about 1217–1228, and Sheriff of Hampshire and Wiltshire, 1228–9, in which latter year he became King's Coroner. At the time of Matilda de Barbfle's appointment Henry de Cerne, having the custody of the Abbey as the King's escheator during the vacancy, is commanded to give seizin to Walter de Romesey as seneschal, and is especially forbidden to interfere any further with the convent property. This Walter was one of a long line of the Romesey family who held possessions in Somerset, Hants, and Wilts, and who for several centuries had dealings with the Abbey.

The deeds which give Walter de Romesey's name give

some information about the clergy. About the year 1212 there were three presbyters (priests), Ranulph, Simon his brother, and Richard de Mannestun. They were either chaplains or prebendaries, possibly the latter, as throughout the early centuries there were three prebendal stalls attached to the Abbey. One of these carried with it the church of Edington in Wiltshire; the other two were connected with the parish church of St. Laurence within the Abbey, the one having attached to it the church of Tymsbury, near Romsey, together with the chapel of Imber, in Wiltshire, the other having rights in the Abbey property at Sydmanton in North Hampshire, near Newbury, Berks. The former of these was entitled "The Prebend of St. Laurence the Greater."

In the time of Cecilia (1238–47), Adam and John are described as Canons of Romsey, and further particulars are given in an interesting arbitration about tithe made in 1241 by Robert Bingham, Bishop of Salisbury (27th May, 1229—3rd November, 1246). In this deed John de Romesey is spoken of as Rector of Edington, and Adam as Rector of St. Laurence, Romesey. The Bishop awards to John the Church of Edingdon, with the Chapel of Bradley, and the tenths in Beynton, Tenhide, and Coueleston; and to Adam the Chapel of Ymmemere, with all that belongs to it, conditionally, however, that eight marcs a year are given to the Abbess by way of tithe, as had been the custom. Had the seals of this document remained intact they would have afforded much interest, since they included the seals of the Bishop, the Convent, the Abbess, and those of the two Rectors, but, with the exception of a small scrap of the Abbess's seal, they are all missing. One other cleric is mentioned in this document, Angerus, who was no doubt a chaplain under Abbess Cecilia. This lady's seneschal, or steward, is described in another document as Henry de Jueul.

John de Romesey's successor appears to have been John de Whwytechirch (Whitchurch), he again was succeeded by Geoffrey Britoni in 1262. This is to be learnt from a deed of Giles of Bridport, Bishop of Salisbury (11th March, 1257—13th December, 1262) to this Geoffrey, who was a canon of the Cathedral. The Bishop recites a letter from Pope Alexander empowering him to confer benefices prebendal or otherwise, having cure of souls, upon Thomas de Rumesye and his three other clerks whom he shall know to be suitable. By this authority he confers on Geoffrey the Church of Edyndon, lately vacant by the death of Master John de Whwytechirch, formerly rector.

Another benefice in this neighbourhood came under the attention of the Bishop of Salisbury in the time of Abbess Constance. The benefice was that of Steeple Ashton, which lay a few miles from Edington and within the Convent's manor. The Bishop's order with respect to it is of sufficient interest to quote at length :—

"To all, etc., William of York, Bishop of Salisbury [14th July, 1247—January 31st, 1255–6] greeting. Whereas our Lord the Pope granted Ashton Church, *i.e.*, the rectory, to Constance Abbess and the Convent of Romsey to be applied to their own uses saving a competent vicar, we with her consent, etc., have ordained as follows :—

"Besides maintaining the old vicarage portion, which was oblations and confessions, tithe of wool and lambs, cheese, milk, pigs (as well out of the court of the Abbess, as of the whole parish), tithe of mills, pannage of pigs, Cheresett in all tithes of demesne of the parson and tenants, apples and all small tithes in the Abbess' court and in all the parish, 'esculentum et poculentum' supplied according to custom to the vicar at Christmas and Easter by the Convent.

"There shall also accrue to Vicar Godwyn and all his successors all the tithe with villan hay in Sulde Ashton, Ashton

Dunstaville (*i.e.*, Gifford), and West Ashton. Also he shall have 24 pigs in the woods of the Abbess and certain other rights of feeding for 6 cows, etc. Also a court and house with shrubbery belonging to the rectory; the old vicar's house to go to the Abbess, except two acres of the old vicarage. The vicar having more than 20*s.* burden to bear, to receive 12*s.* a year from Bradley church, 5*s.* from Trowbridge, and 4*s.* from the Abbess' demesne at Tylshyde. All the rest of the rectory to go to the Abbess. But the vicar shall have two chaplains continually with him to serve the church at his own expense, and the vicar shall bear one third part of the Episcopal and other charges, and the Abbess the rest. Sealed and dated 1st October, 1252."

A reference to one of the chief duties of chaplains, that of saying mass for the living and departed, occurs in an agreement between Abbess Cecilia and Joan de Nevill in 1244. Joan had given to the Church of Romsey a caracute (some 100 acres) of land in la Lee, which was to come into the possession of the convent "in free and perpetual alms at her death," in return the Abbess grants that when this takes place "the Abbey shall find and maintain a suitable chaplain, who shall celebrate divine service for the soul of Joan and of her ancestors and heirs for ever."

The land in La Lee had been part of Joan's dower, and one Robert de Shorewell, in the year 1241, confirms the land, stated then to be half a hide and thirty-seven acres, to Joan as of his gift. She pays twenty marks of silver on the occasion, or £13. 6*s.* 8*d.*, a mark being 13*s.* 4*d.* The total in present day value might be £320. The dowry spoken of may have reference to a second marriage, Joan having also been married to a William de St. Martin.

The interest which this lady displayed in the convent opens up a whole field of enquiry which may some day throw a good deal of light on connections between the convent and several noble families of the period. Joan's

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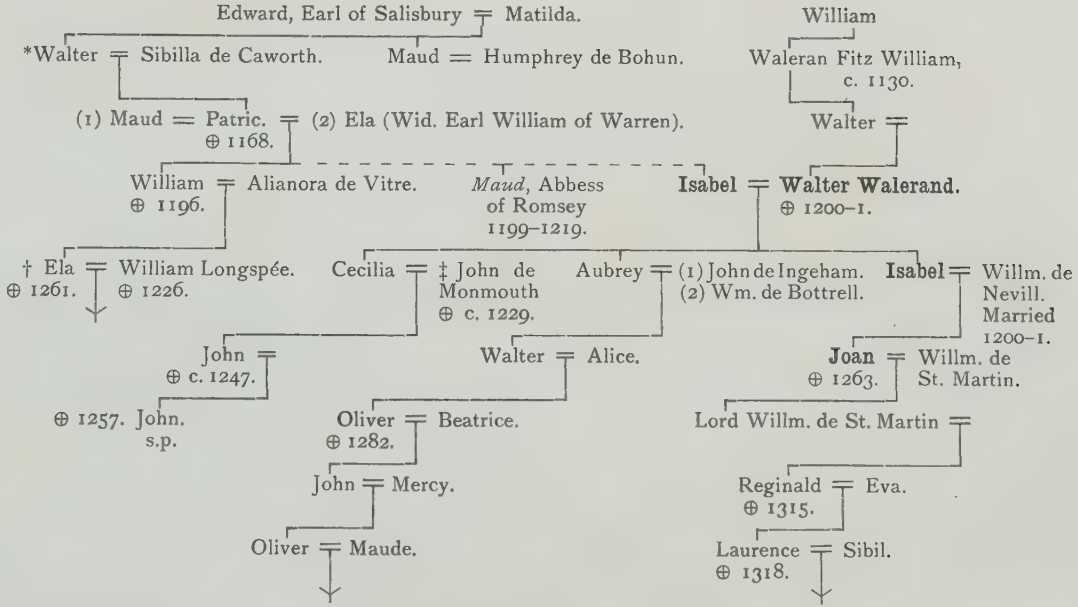
PEDIGREES OF SALISBURY AND WALERAND.


Edward, Earl of Salisbury = Matilda.
William
*Walter = Sibilla de Caworth.
Maud = Humphrey de Bohun.
Waleran Fitz William, c. 1130.
(1) Maud = Patric. ⊕ 1168. = (2) Ela (Wid. Earl William of Warren).
Walter =
William = Alianora de Vitre. ⊕ 1196.
Maud, Abbess of Romsey 1199–1219.
Isabel = Walter Walerand. ⊕ 1200–1.
† Ela ⊕ 1261. = William Longspée. ⊕ 1226.
Cecilia = ‡ John de Monmouth ⊕ c. 1229.
Aubrey = (1) John de Ingeham. (2) Wm. de Bottrell.
Isabel = Willm. de Nevill. Married 1200–1.
John = ⊕ c. 1247.
Walter = Alice.
Joan = Willm. de St. Martin. ⊕ 1263.
⊕ 1257. John. s.p.
Oliver = Beatrice. ⊕ 1282.
Lord Willm. de St. Martin =
John = Mercy.
Reginald = Eva. ⊕ 1315.
Oliver = Maude.
Laurence = Sibil. ⊕ 1318.

* Founder of Bradenstoke Priory. † Foundress and Abbess of Laycock, 1240. ‡ Founder of Grace Dieu Abbey.
⊕ Signifies date of death.

mother was one of three heiresses, daughters of Walter Walerand. The latter owned estates at Dene and East Grinstead, and held the Serjeantry of the Forests in Hampshire under the Crown. He had married Isabel, a member of the great house of the Earls of Salisbury. Her exact place in the pedigree is not easy to determine, and is here given tentatively. If she was the daughter of Patric, Earl of Salisbury, she would have been the aunt of the celebrated Countess Ela, who was married to William Longspée, natural son of Henry II, and became the foundress of Laycock Abbey. Isabel's husband, Walter Walerand, is said to have had a sister or half-sister, Abbess of Romsey; this is the lady who is described as Matilda Patric and Matilda Walerand. The name Patric forcibly suggests that Matilda too was of the Salisbury family and sister to Isabel, and should in that case be strictly described as sister-in-law to Walter Walerand.

The three daughters and heiresses of Walter and Isabel were Cecily, married to John de Monmouth, founder of Grace Dieu Abbey, Albreda or Aubrey, married to John de Ingeham, and Isabel, married to William de Nevill, the mother of Joan, mentioned above. A glance at the pedigree will make the relationship of these people clear, and the suggestions which are not proved will be seen by the dotted lines and italics.

When Cecily's grandson died in 1257 he held a third part of a knight's fee in Bardolfeston near Puddleton, Dorset. His holding was no doubt his grandmother's share, her sisters holding the other two shares. At the grandson's death the share was divided between Cecily's sister Aubrey and her niece, Joan de Nevill, so that when the latter died in 1263 she held half a knight's fee instead of a third. And now a curious thing happens; in 1285 *three* parties and not *two* hold Bardolfeston, namely,

William de St. Martin, Joan's heir, John de Ingeham, Aubrey's heir, and the Abbess of Romsey; nor did the Convent cease its holding till the suppression of the monasteries. The Abbey's right must have been acquired at some time previous to 1285, and may have been much earlier. Perhaps Joan de Nevill was the benefactor, and entered into an agreement that the property should come to the Abbey after her death as with the property at La Lee. It must not be forgotten also that an Isabel de Nevill was Abbess of Romsey in 1237 to 1238, who one must suppose from Joan's great interest in the Abbey was her mother, during widowhood.

In the south transept lies a very beautiful effigy[1] of a woman, one it is said of the most beautiful in this part of England. The head-dress is exactly like that to be found on the seal of Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who died 1261. The style of the monument also is to be dated about the middle of the thirteenth century. Now according to a journal of the Rev. J. Skinner dated 1817, and preserved in the B.M. Add. MSS., "the figure was found about a century previous to 1817 whilst digging a grave near the font," that is at the west end of the nave, where the font then stood. The position indicates the original place of the effigy, amidst the later additions to the church in the Early Pointed style of *circa* 1240 to 1260, and no doubt commemorates a benefactor of the period. What more likely than that this effigy represents Joan de Nevill herself, who died in 1263, or some member of this family which manifested so evident an interest in the convent? Further evidence may at any time turn up to prove or disprove the suggestion, but it seemed worth while giving for lack of any better account of the origin of this beautiful monument.

[1] See frontispiece.

There are a great many names of other people scattered up and down in deeds of this period, about whom some interesting particulars might be given, if it were possible to spend the time required in collecting and sifting the facts. For instance, Walter and his son Ralph de Edyndon, are worthy of notice because they were no doubt ancestors of William de Edyndon, the great Bishop of Winchester, in the fourteenth century. Again, in the absence of any list of sisters at this time, the names of two nuns, Eustachia de Fauconburg and Hillaria de Percy, may be mentioned. They report the death of the unnamed Maud to the King on 14th December, 1230. The former was, it is likely, the daughter of Eustace de Fauconburg, who sat as a King's Justice at Westminster, 1st June, 1203; the latter may be supposed to be a member of the great family of Percy afterwards Earls of Northumberland, who originally held lands both in Hampshire and Sussex.

Although some of the sisters at Romsey, as at other places, came from county families, and some from noble and even royal stock, their birth would have given them no necessary superiority in the convent. Nevertheless, although the world was excluded from the religious house, and all were sisters, a certain amount of state must have surrounded the Abbess as the head of a great community and the ruler of large estates, with far-reaching powers over goods and men. Abbess Maud with her seneschal Sir Walter de Romesey, Knight, himself a Royal Justice and King's Sheriff, expresses the dignity and importance of the house and its head, as it appeared to the outside world, whatever the piety, simplicity, and humility of the religious ladies within its walls.

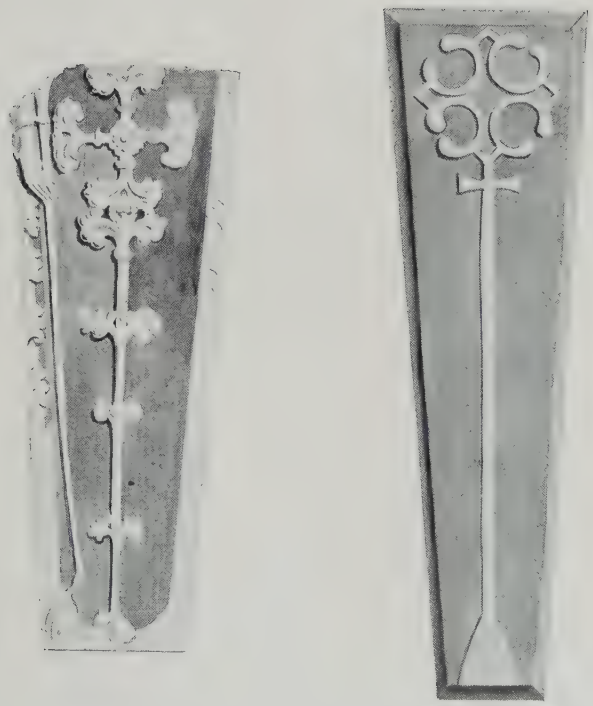
The history of Alice Walerand, the lady who held the Abbacy at the death of Henry III and lived on through the greater part of Edward I's reign, will illustrate still

further the relation of the Abbess and convent to the outer world, and the first surviving record of an episcopal visitation of Romsey, which was made in her time, will give some insight into the internal condition and discipline of the convent.

Abbess Alice Walerand succeeded Abbess Amicia de Sulhere. The latter died before 11th July, 1268, when the nuns Alice Letice and Johanna Roudon reported her death to the King and begged licence to elect a new Abbess. The new election obtained the assent of the Crown on the 28th of July, a confirmation of the Abbey's Charters having been already made on the 10th of July. This lady entertained King Edward I in 1275, when two days, the 28th and 29th of January, were spent at Romsey by the royal party. After this date royal visits were probably less common than they had been, for with the death of Henry III the royal family ceased to reside at Winchester, and the city and neighbourhood became of much less importance.

Within the next five years Abbess Alice obtained a confirmation of the right of assize of bread and ale, by which she as lady of the manor, through her officer, tested the measures of these important articles of diet, and inflicted a fine, or in other words took a toll from the bakers and brewers for fulfilling this duty. Her right had been called in question, but her attorney proved to the Court that the charter of a free market, conceded by the late king, covered her right, and the Abbess was left in peace. This confirmation was followed by another relating to the property of Northwood (4th January, 1280), when a charter of Henry II was examined, which proved that this wood had been given to the Abbey by King Edward the Confessor.

The variety of business coming under the cognizance of an Abbess may be illustrated from several other documents:—On the 1st May, 1278, John de Montague and



COFFIN LIDS, 13TH CENTURY.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 78.]

Mabel his wife, and Christine de la Slade, who had a share in two premises in Romsey, yield their right to the Abbess, who in return grants them for life a shop in Romsey, which Walter le Fatte sometime held, they paying *6d.* as a yearly rent. On the 8th July, 1281, Robert de la Wylderne and his wife Maud quitclaim a messuage and two acres of land to the Abbess and her church for a sparrow-hawk of a year old. Such payments, like a pepper-corn, a red rose at midsummer, or a clove gilly-flower, are very common in these documents.

Another document introduces the celebrated Countess Isabella, wife of William de Fortibus, Earl of Albermarle, and sister of Baldwin de Redvers, Earl of Devon. In 1288, 8th July, the Abbess yielded all right she might have in the advowson of the Church of Freshwater in the Isle of Wight to Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Albe Marlie, who had warranted the Manor to Margaret, wife of Robert Aguylun. The right was of some value, for the Abbess received 200 marcs of silver for her compliance. This sum might equal some £3200 to-day. No evidence, so far, has come to light as to how Romsey obtained rights in the advowson of Freshwater Church.

Two other deeds make a reference to the Romsey family. John de Romesey, Rector of Edington and one of the Canons and Prebendaries of the Abbey, gave a ploughland to the Convent, situate in Testwode and la Waude, 3rd April, 1294. He held it of Richard de Testwode at a rent of *5s.*, the latter holding it of the Abbey. It was worth two marcs a year. The other deed, dated but two months before the Abbess's death, carries the reader into Berkshire, to Enborn or Estenedburne near Newbury, a place not far from the Romsey property at Sydmanton. The connection between the two properties appears in an entry of a fine to the King in

1256, by which it appears that the Abbess confirmed a grant for life to John de Romesey, son of Walter, of the Manor of Sidemanton, with rent in Eneborn, Robert Walerand being surety for the rent. On January 28th, 1298, Abbess Alice and the Convent entered into a covenant to concede this Manor to Master Thomas de Alberburia, given to him by Ralph, son of Walter Pygon, who formerly held it. The Convent was to receive a rent of 55*s.* and a fine on the spot of £20. Amongst the witnesses occur the names of two burgesses of Newbury.

Forest rights were a matter of great importance and were therefore liable to become the subject of dispute. Early in Alice Walerand's time, 1272, the question whether the woods of Ashton and Edington were without the bounds of Selwood Forest arose; if they were within they came under the hands of the Royal Foresters. An enquiry was held, and it was found that they were without the bounds of the forest up to the time of Alan Nevill, the Royal Justiciary of the Forest, who had made them part of it. After his time certain knights and others came forward and subscribed £100 of silver to have a perambulation, by which the Abbess's woods were excluded from the forest, and continued so down to the time of Robert Passelewe, who had again made them forest. By two later enquiries these woods were declared to be outside the boundaries of Selwood, and no doubt the Romsey Steward congratulated himself on the successful maintenance of the Abbey's rights.

Twenty years later another forest right had to be defended, and that nearer home. An enquiry had been held as to the "lawing" of the Abbess's dogs at Romsey and in the neighbourhood. This "lawing" was the cutting off the claws of a dog's forefeet, and was done to conform

to the forest laws for the protection of the King's game. The King's order may be quoted at length :—

"Order to permit the Abbess of Romsey and her tenants, without and within the bridge of Bradebrugg, to be acquitted of the lawing of their dogs without the bridge aforesaid and in the hamlets pertaining to the Manor of Romsey, as the King learns by inquisition taken by the Justice that King Edgar granted the Manor of Romsey both without and within the said bridge, with the hamlets pertaining to it, to the Church of Romsey in 'frank almoin' or free gift, as fully as he held it in demesne (*i.e.*, as lord of the manor), and that the Abbess and her tenants . . . . were always from that time quit of the lawing of their dogs until the time of William Briwere, who unjustly exacted such lawing from them, when he had the custody of the forest of La Bere near Winchester. And that they had peace from that time until the time when John Maunsell had the custody of the forest, whose bailiff Alan again levied this lawing by force, and so afterwards the foresters continued the custom to the damage of the Abbess and against her liberty."

In connection with the Romsey woods it is worth noting that a commission was issued in May, and again in June, 1297, to try the persons who assaulted Almaricus de Somersete in the Romsey woods. Hampshire at this time was infested with robbers, and travelling was dangerous. Mr. Shore says :—

"By the Statute of Winchester, in 1285, the people of each hundred were obliged to make hue and cry after felons, and if any person, seeing a felon, did not raise the hue and cry, and if others did not join in it, they were liable. It was not sufficient to allow the criminal to depart to another hundred. The hue and cry had to be raised, a chase made and continued from hundred to hundred until the culprit was caught. Many an exciting chase, with many a cry of 'Stop, thief,' or perhaps of 'Murder,' must have taken place across the county in those days."

From these rather dull legal documents it will be

pleasant to turn to the injunctions of Archbishop Peckham, made after a visitation by that prelate. It is thought that they were issued about 1283. Possibly the visitation was held just before Bishop John de Pontoise was consecrated Bishop of Winchester in 1282, otherwise it is hard to find a reason for a visitation by the Metropolitan.

Extract from Archbishop Peckham's Register.

"Brother John, by Divine permission the humble servant of the Church of Canterbury, primate of all England, to his beloved daughters in Christ the Abbess and Convent of Romeseyhe, salutation, grace and benediction.

"In a lily garden the Bridegroom is filled with delight, and finds pleasure in gathering lilies above all other flowers. It is therefore needful to enclose this garden by the defence of shrewd and sharp discipline, as the Paradise of God was enclosed by angelic care and the flaming sword, lest an entrance be opened to the serpent into the same, or to any sower of mischief, by which the pleasure of the Bridegroom should be turned to displeasure or less liking. This lily we believe to be the whole celestial and angelic ornament of virginal purity, which, by reason of certain matters found in our Metropolitan visitation lately held, in canonical form, we desire to protect in perpetuity by the ready defence of injunctions.

"First, therefore, we ordain that the Abbess for the time being choose a discreet council and change her companions every year so that by many testimonies the truth of her discretion may become known. Also that she ever bear in mind to behave as a mother of the society, and to cause herself to be regarded as such by all and each who require consolation, no less than is an earthly mother by her natural daughters. Let her therefore always seek to attract to herself the true affection of all without the

accepting of persons, and so to show herself with saving probity to all alike that she be in no way noted for partiality. Let her, moreover, earnestly consider herself not as the mistress of the community's goods, but only as one who discharges the office of a stewardess.

"No abbess is to live finely and especially whilst the convent suffer want, and if the convent lack, the abbess is to show her sympathy, as a mother to her daughters, by doing away with her separate table and eating with the sisters, and any guests are to be refreshed at such times in the common hall.

"Without the advice of the Chapter, she is not to appoint the steward, bailiffs or household servants.

"If the abbess cannot be present at compline, the nun who is over the choir, with two of the more honourable of the nuns, shall inform her that compline has been said, and immediately all drinking in her chamber shall cease, and all lay people, whether of the household or guests, and also the religious shall leave, and at once the abbess shall say compline that she may be with the convent in the night watches, provided that she is not prevented by bodily infirmity; and in her chamber she shall have no lay people beyond two handmaidens.

"The nuns are not to eat, when in good health, except in the refectory or abbess' chamber.

"No man is to enter the nuns' chambers under pain of the greater excommunication, but in case of sickness the confessor, doctor, or relative may do so, in honourable company, and so avoid even suspicion of evil.

"Four officers (Scrutatrices) are to keep the cloisters clear of any persons who come to gaze or chatter. A nun breaking silence with any man in the cloister is to be deprived of a pittance at the next meal. Such conversation

is permitted only in the parlour or in the side of the church next the cloister, and to avoid unseemly conversation she is to have two companions.

"Confessions are to be heard before the high altar or at the side of the church next the cloister.

"No nun is to go out except in staid company, nor is she to stay with secular folk beyond three days.

"The superstition accustomed to be observed at the Nativity and Ascension of our Lord, we condemn for ever.

"Women are not to be admitted as paying guests, without licence."

A special injunction follows: "That a habit having arisen on the part of those going out, of eating and drinking on their return in the houses of layfolk and clerks in the town of Romesey, this is forbidden to the Abbess and sisters on pain of suspension from the monastery for a year."

These injunctions, together with the appointment by the Archbishop of three coadjutors for the Abbess, Margery de Verdun, Phillipa de Stokes, and Johanna de Rovedoune, give the impression that the discipline was not as strictly maintained as it should have been, and that the convent had won for itself somewhat of a name for social pleasures, but there is nothing worse.

A trouble arose in 1286, by reason of the extravagant and dissolute life of one of the Prebendaries, William Schyrlock, who annoyed the sisters, and he is forbidden the church and convent.

Before closing this chapter some personal account must be given of Abbess Alice Walerand or Walraund. She came of a noble family, who owned the castle and manor of Kilpec in Herefordshire, her mother being Isabella de Kilpec and her father William Walerand. A seal belonging

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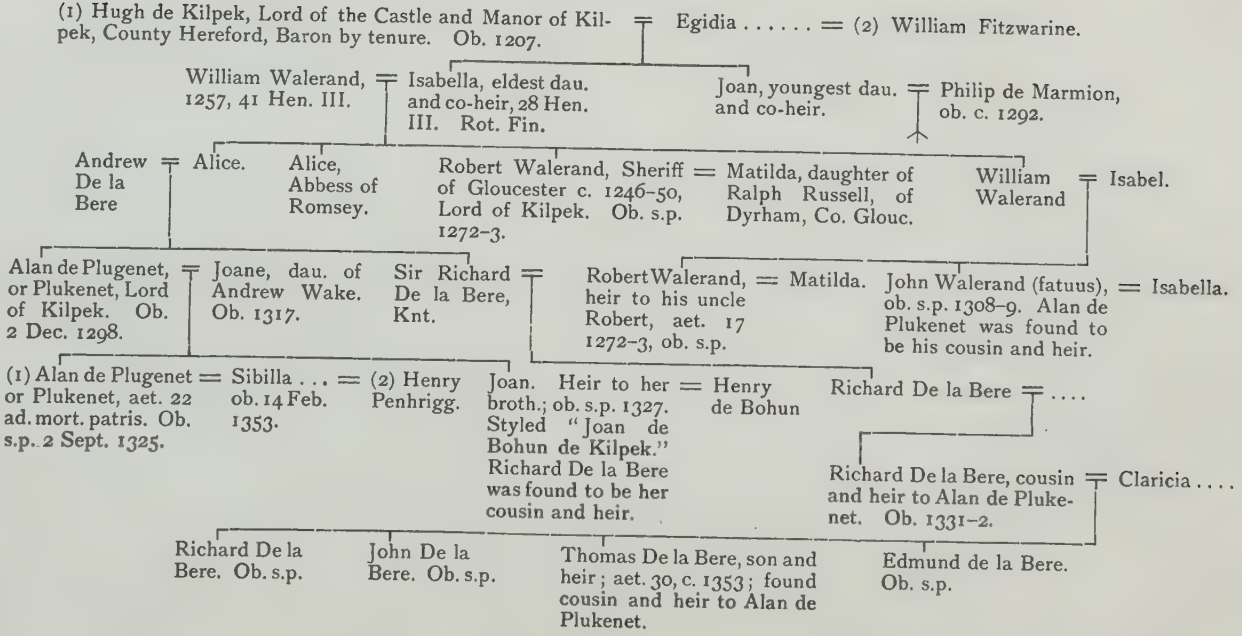
PEDIGREES OF WILLIAM WALERAND, PLUGENET, AND DE LA BERE.


(1) Hugh de Kilpek, Lord of the Castle and Manor of Kilpek, County Hereford, Baron by tenure. Ob. 1207.
Egidia . . . . . = (2) William Fitzwarine.
William Walerand, 1257, 41 Hen. III.
Isabella, eldest dau. and co-heir, 28 Hen. III. Rot. Fin.
Joan, youngest dau. and co-heir.
Philip de Marmion, ob. c. 1292.
Andrew De la Bere
Alice.
Alice, Abbess of Romsey.
Robert Walerand, Sheriff of Gloucester c. 1246–50, Lord of Kilpek. Ob. s.p. 1272–3.
Matilda, daughter of Ralph Russell, of Dyrham, Co. Glouc.
William Walerand
Isabel.
Alan de Plugenet, or Plukenet, Lord of Kilpek. Ob. 2 Dec. 1298.
Joane, dau. of Andrew Wake. Ob. 1317.
Sir Richard De la Bere, Knt.
Robert Walerand, heir to his uncle Robert, aet. 17 1272–3, ob. s.p.
Matilda.
John Walerand (fatuus), ob. s.p. 1308–9. Alan de Plukenet was found to be his cousin and heir.
Isabella.
(1) Alan de Plugenet or Plukenet, aet. 22 ad. mort. patris. Ob. s.p. 2 Sept. 1325.
Sibilla . . . ob. 14 Feb. 1353.
(2) Henry Penhrigg.
Joan. Heir to her broth.; ob. s.p. 1327. Styled "Joan de Bohun de Kilpek." Richard De la Bere was found to be her cousin and heir.
Henry de Bohun
Richard De la Bere
. . . .
Richard De la Bere, cousin and heir to Alan de Plukenet. Ob. 1331–2.
Claricia . . . .
Richard De la Bere. Ob. s.p.
John De la Bere. Ob. s.p.
Thomas De la Bere, son and heir; aet. 30, c. 1353; found cousin and heir to Alan de Plukenet.
Edmund de la Bere. Ob. s.p.

to her mother was found some years ago (1842) at Ewshot in the parish of Crondall, Hants. Engraved on it is the representation of a lady with a hawk on her wrist and a lure in her right hand, with the legend "S(igillum) Isabelle Wale'rant."

The male line of the family came to an end early in the fourteenth century. Alice's elder brother Robert, a sheriff of Gloucestershire, dying without issue in 1272–3, the property would naturally have descended to his brother William's sons, Robert and John, but they had no issue, and the latter was unhappily deficient in intellect. Robert had, moreover, before his death enfeoffed another nephew with the manor of Kilpec; this nephew was named Alan de Plukenet or Plogenet and was the second son of his sister Alice,—not of course a son of the abbess, but of another Alice, there being two Alices in the family. Her elder son was Richard de la Bere and her husband was Andrew de la Bere. It is worth while entering into these particulars, because a sixteenth century antiquarian, Gerard, has recorded a scandalous story about the abbess, which appears, on examination of contemporary records, to be groundless.

In his Survey of Somerset, under Haselbury, Gerard says:—"I think it worth my labour to transcribe unto you in its own words, forme and language, what I found in an old parchment which came accidentally to my hands of the owners of this Haselberye. In this now following you may observe the power of a virgin vow." After quoting the pedigree, he continues:—"Alicia secunda fuit Abbatissa de Romsey et obiit professa et sine herede de se que tamen habuit exitum, viz., Ricardum de la bere." In his own words Gerard adds:—"The family of De la Bere, however thay came out of a nun's lapp and parted with a great part of their estate unto heires generall, yet they flourished long

in great good note in Herefordshire and were feodaries to the Bohuns heretofore Earls of Hereford."

Here is a pretty scandal, and one the more unlikely at this early date, about which there is not a breath in the Archbishop's visitation. An examination of the inquiries, made by the King's officers as to heirs at the death of an owner of property, known as "Inquisitio post mortem," disposes of the scandal and proves it groundless. There are a number of these inquisitions relating to different members of the family. One was taken in 1309–10, when a dispute arose as to whether Alan de Plukenet, the grandson of Alice, *née* Walerand, was heir to the property of the family. The children of one Cecily, who it was said was a sister of Alice, claimed against Alan. These persons denied the existence of any Alice, except the Abbess of Romsey. The Court however held differently and declared that there were two Alices, one the Abbess and the other the mother of Alan, and that he was born in lawful wedlock.

A very special inquiry was made in 1353, which went very carefully into the whole matter. A Thomas de la Bere, great grandson of Richard, the Abbess's nephew, claimed a property which had formerly belonged to her other nephew, Alan de Plukenet, Richard's younger brother. The Crown on the other side claimed the property, it being said that Alan was a foreigner and a bastard. Thomas denies this stoutly, and the Justices of Assize appear to have agreed with him, for they give their verdict on his side, and say that Alan was born in Dorset, at Thornton, of Andrew de la Bere and Alice his wife, sister of William Walerand and Robert his brother, of the English nation in lawful wedlock, and is not a foreigner or a bastard. They further trace back the pedigree of Thomas de la Bere to his great grandfather, and say that the latter was brother

of Alan Plukenet, or Plogenet, as it is sometimes spelt. This verdict of contemporary evidence, given moreover to the disadvantage of the Crown, is better than that of an "old parchment," of uncertain date, quoted by a post-Reformation antiquary. The confusion probably arose from the Abbess and her married sister bearing the same name.

Alan was a person of much importance at Court, as may be gathered from the following extract from Dugdale's Baronage. "In 1296–7 the King, Edward I, being in Flanders, and constituting Edward, his son, Governor in his absence, this Alan, being a person highly esteemed for his wisdom and military knowledge, was appointed one of his assistants for advice therein."

If little gratitude is due to Gerard for handing on the scandal, he has done good service by recording the burial-place of the Abbess. "She is," he adds, "buried in the south part of the choir before the altar of S. Anne, 'matris Marie.'" It may therefore be supposed that the south choir aisle apse held S. Anne's altar.

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CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 1298—1333.

EARLY EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS.

"All these things shall be read and recited in chapter before the whole convent, at least once a month, until they be all executed."

Injunctions of Bp. John de Pontoise.

Chapter VI.

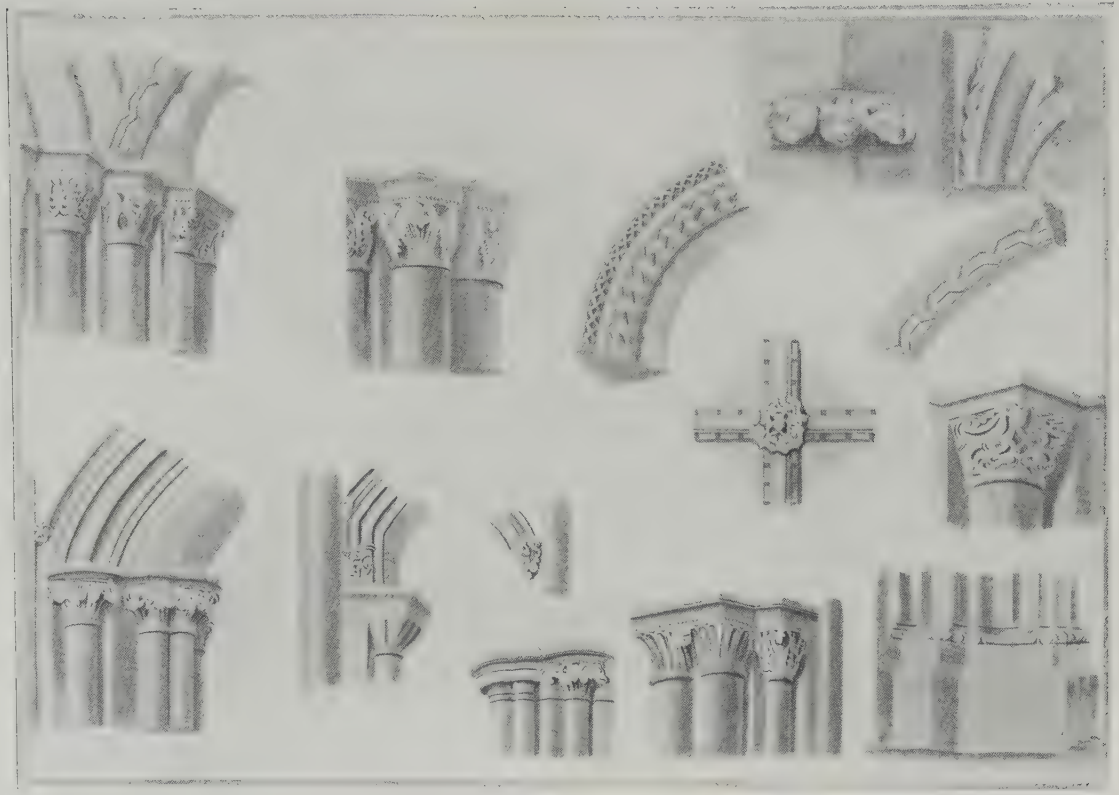
EARLY EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS.

THE office of an abbess carried with it both honour and power, her pastoral staff, her separate lodging, the minute order and ceremonies observed at her election and installation, the honour shewed her whenever she appeared amongst her sisters, all combined to proclaim the dignity and power of her office. These externals of office were not meaningless, nor were they a thing apart, they proclaimed and enforced one of the essential features of the monastic life, that of order, rule and obedience. The idea of monasticism, of a well-ordered household living under rule for the honour of God, could not be maintained without the Head of the House. The welfare of a convent therefore depended on the Abbess, and to a considerable extent upon the character and ability of the lady who was at any time appointed. It must then have been a misfortune to Romsey that changes should have been so frequent or that the ruler should have fallen into ill-health, as happened in the early part of the fourteenth century.

Four abbesses succeeded between 1298 and 1333: Phillipa de Stokes (1298—1307), Clemencia de Guldeford (1307 — 1314), Alicia de Wyntereshulle (1315), Sybil Carbonel (1315 — 1333). The first two fell into bad health or became infirm after about six years of rule, and

attorneys in each case were appointed to carry on the business of the house. A grave misfortune happened to the Convent when Alicia de Wyntereshulle was appointed; she survived but a few months (5th February—May), when she was poisoned by some miscreants. How and for what reason the crime was committed does not appear. The Crown appointed a commission to inquire into it on 28th May, consisting of Henry le Scrop, John Dabernoun, and John Bluet, and on 11th July, John Randolph took the place of John Dabernoun. In the latter writ the wording runs, "touching the persons who plotting the death of Alicia de Wyntereshulle, late Abbess of Romsey, caused her to be drugged."

The Bishop (Henry Woodlock) wrote an indignant letter:—"To our beloved the Archdeacon of Winchester. We have heard with horror a story propagated by some unknown sons of iniquity, as scandalous as it is malicious and false, defaming our convent of Romsey in general, and especially the good memory of Alicia de Wyntereshulle, late Abbess thereof, accusing them of plotting her death by drugging, whereby these vile detractors have incurred the punishment of the greater excommunication. We therefore, in order to put a stop to such malicious and defamatory attempts in future, order that they be excommunicated accordingly in the said monastery as well as in other churches in your Archdeaconry, and in the vulgar tongue, to the intent that the matter may be fully understood by all, at the time of the solemn Mass, by ringing of bells, lighting of candles, and again extinguishing them, each Lord's day and festival. You shall denounce them and cause others to do likewise." There is no date to this letter, and the only explanation that can be given is that the Abbess died through the machinations of some miscreants, but that she and her sisters and the officials



[J. Buckler, 1806.

CARVINGS.—CHIEFLY ON NORTH SIDE.

Broadlands Collection.

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and servants of the convent were not only guiltless of ill-doing, but also of any scandalous living.

The rule of the next Abbess, Sybil Carbonel, was longer than that of any of her predecessors, and lasted eighteen years; it appears to have been quite uneventful; perhaps she is to be congratulated on having no history. In no one case can the families of these ladies be exactly identified; but the Wyntereshulles at this time held property at Bramley near Guildford, in the county of Surrey, and one of them was Sheriff of Southampton in 1259, and another, probably his son, in 1270–72.

Whilst little is known about these Abbesses, a fresh source of information about the internal condition of the nunnery becomes available. Before the last quarter of the thirteenth century, there are no episcopal registers of the diocese from which information may be drawn. It is said that the books before Bishop John de Pontoise's Episcopate have been lost; in any case they are not to be found in the Bishop's registry, but from 1282 and onwards the registers continue without a break, except for a lost book of Bishop Beaufort's, covering the years 1416–1447. From these registers a good deal of information can be gleaned; they give the appointments of clergy, whether canons or vicars; they describe with elaborate detail the election of abbesses, and in some cases they yield the names of the sisters who formed the community, adding the titles of those who were officers. At one time a license for the removal of a body to a more honourable place of burial is given; at another a dispute as to the use of the church by the townspeople is settled; but the chief interest of these registers is to be found in the visitations of the religious house by the bishops.

The Diocesan had the right of visitation in Romsey Abbey. After service he entered the Chapter House,

questioned the sisters as to any irregularities, and formulated the results in a set of Injunctions, which were sent to the Abbess to be read frequently in Chapter, that faults might be corrected. There are a good many of these Visitation Injunctions still extant, which were published between the 14th and 16th centuries, and they throw some light on the condition of the Monastery during two hundred and fifty years. But it must be borne in mind that they dwell solely upon the faults of the community and not upon the virtues, and therefore give but a one-sided view of the state of the house. What is virtuous and good and regular is left unrecorded, whilst what is evil and irregular and faulty is prominently brought forward, that it may be corrected. This fact must always be borne in mind in reading Visitation Injunctions, lest an unjust and unfair view be taken of the monastic life. Bishop John de Pontoise made a Visitation in 1302, and his successor, Bishop Woodlock, in 1311. Their Injunctions are not altogether unlike those issued by Archbishop Peckham, when he visited the Abbey c. 1282, indeed, his articles are expressly referred to.

In the first of these Visitations, made during the time of Phillipa de Stokes, serious fault is found in matters relating to the business of the house, such as rendering the accounts, keeping the seal, and the letting of the land. Some of the servants had given trouble, and some slackness in observing the etiquette in the departments of the pantry, buttery, and bakery had crept in, the rule of Monasteries in these matters being very precise. More serious is the reference made to nuns staying with friends in the town, a practice which is noticed again and again in later times; but the most serious matter is the late rising of the Convent, and the irregular hours at which the divine offices were said. Still there is nothing scandalous, and the Convent, no doubt, continued a steady and peaceful obser-

vance of the rules of Saint Benedict, distributed its alms, and entertained strangers as in duty bound,—troubled somewhat by a want of energy in its ruler, who was becoming infirm, and unable to discharge the very responsible duties of her office, on which so much depended.

In the record of the Visitation, made by Bishop Woodlock some nine years later, when Clemencia de Guldeford was Abbess, many of the former recommendations occur again, indeed, the Bishop expressly refers to his predecessor's monitions, but there are some new points. Secular persons, many of whom appear to have taken up their lodging within the convent, or at least within the precincts, are to be sent away, and no seculars are to be admitted at all to the Mass celebrated in the Infirmary. The Infirmary at Romsey had, as in the case of most monasteries, a separate chapel for the sick, that at Romsey being dedicated in honour of Saint Andrew. Provision is made for the exercise of convalescents in the garden, and for a supply of proper food for the patients. A burial is to be carried out at the expense of the Abbey, "for a nun should have no property for such a purpose." Courtesy is again enlarged upon, and the younger ladies are to be chastized for rebelliousness.

A passage about children is of much interest, showing that Romsey was still an educational establishment, and that there was need of care lest the constant presence of children should interfere with the Sisters' attention to their religious rule of silence and worship. Miss Mary Bateson in "Mediæval England" quotes a visitation injunction made for Romsey with regard to pet animals. She says: "The prevalent passion for pet animals which infected both sexes, and the lay as well as the religious, was commented upon in visitations of monks and nuns wherever it had become a nuisance to some of the inmates.

The Abbess of Romsey stinted her nuns to provide for her dogs and monkeys."

The large number of nuns is complained of. It was supposed that at the new foundation under King Edgar there were one hundred, so at least says Peter de Langtoft, writing about this time. In 1333, on the death of Sybil Carbonel, there were exactly ninety-one ladies in the Convent, it would seem, therefore, that the numbers in Bishop Woodlock's day may have exceeded one hundred. The numbers, however, soon fell, and before many years were past the Convent shrank still further, and never recovered its former estate.

With so large a community, and under an Abbess who very shortly became infirm, it is not surprising that some matters required correction, but of any grave scandal not a word is heard, and as no monitions were issued at the next Visitation by Bishop Orlton in 1334, it may be supposed that during Sybil Carbonel's reign all was well. It is, of course, possible that the latter Bishop's Injunctions have been lost, but his visitation is described in the register, and no Injunctions are appended.

The Crown made an important concession in 1307. A promise was given that during the next vacancy, on the death of Phillipa de Stokes, the Prioress should have custody of the property, and the Crown's officials should not take it into their hands. This consideration was followed up in 1316 by a perpetual concession of this privilege. The Abbey, however, had to pay a fine of £20 (say £440) for the first month of the vacancy, and if it lasted longer, then they "should pay beyond the said £20 at the rate of that sum for the time in which the vacancy should happen to last." The Crown also reserved the Knights' fees and the right of presenting to the churches which might fall vacant. But the concession

was worth having, owing to the destructions, wastes, and damage done in the woods, forests, and other belongings of the Abbey by the hands of the Crown officials.

"Knights' fees" were an important feature in feudal tenure, "the obligation of the Knight's service was to furnish a fully armed horseman to serve at his own expense for forty days." A very carefully drawn up list of Romsey lands was kept by the Crown officers, and in this century the Abbess was frequently ordered to send her service to the North. In 1309 a muster is called for at Newcastle, and again in 1316; a re-summons occurs in the next year, and in 1318 there is a summons to send against the Scots, the muster being at York; and in 1322 the Abbess is requested to raise as many men-at-arms and foot soldiers as she can against the rebels, or adherents of the Earl of Lancaster, the place of muster being Coventry.

What number of Knights the Abbess of Romsey was liable for does not appear; the meaning of Knights' fees, whether in part discharged by money payments, and whether every five hides of property was in all cases liable to supply a knight, is not clear; if the latter were the case the Romsey contingent must have been of importance. In Hampshire alone the Abbey held over twenty-five hides, to say nothing of the Wiltshire property.

The Convent continued to be held in esteem by those who desired to follow the life of a Religious, and by those who wished to dedicate their daughters to such a life; this may be gathered from a repetition, by Bishop Stratford, of the order that more nuns were not to be received. Bishop Woodlock had ordered, according to a right yielded to the Bishop on the new creation of an Abbess, that a lady, Isolda de Roches, should be received as a nun and sister at his nomination; his order is dated the 20th November, 1307. In his Visitation of 1311, he forbids additions,

the proper number being exceeded; and again in 1327 [27th October] Bishop Stratford writes:—"It is notorious that their house was burdened with ladies beyond the established number which used to be kept; and he has heard that they are being pressed to receive more young ladies (damoyseles) as nuns; he orders them strictly that no young lady, received by them, be veiled, nor any other received until the Bishop shall have visited them, which will be very shortly, or until they have special orders from him."

The special orders followed quickly, for on the 1st of July, 1328, the Bishop gives a permission:—"We have heard that, at the request of Master John de Scures, they are willing to receive Katherine, daughter of 'nostre cher Vadlet' (*i.e.*, dependent or servant), Robert de Warham, as nun, if they have the Bishop's leave; and since he cannot visit them as soon as they expected, and does not wish any longer to delay carrying out their wish in this matter, he gives them leave to receive and give her the veil, if they can do it without damage to the house, notwithstanding any other order from him." A few days later follows yet another letter dated 17th July, 1328. The Bishop writes: "Understanding that the Archbishop, after being raised to that dignity has the right of making one nun in the monastery of Romsey," the Bishop asks for the admission of Denise de la Rye, whose manners and conversation have been oftentimes commended to him. Again, five years later, on the death of Sybil Carbonel, Bishop Stratford exercises his right, when a new Abbess was created, and grants his favour to Alice, daughter of John de Hamptone, his steward (23rd of October, 1333); he claims, on the 26th of November following, the right to nominate another because of "the profession of ladies of that house" which he had lately made, and appoints Jouette de Stretford "en regard de charité."

Nor were the Bishop and Archbishop the only persons who, up to this time, claimed the privilege, evidently one of some value, of nominating a nun, for the family of le Rous of Inmere, in Wilts, held the like right, which they now resigned. The words of the deed are: "A release to the Abbey of Romsey of a right, which the releasor had claimed, to present two nuns to be veiled in the said Abbey with a valect" (*i.e.*, a servant, perhaps maidservant in this case), "to be likewise maintained there," etc. (September, 1313).

From a long list of the nuns, dated 1333, taken with the above nominations, it may be gathered that the country gentlefolk and the officials of bishops and nobles found in Romsey a home for many of their daughters. The popularity of the Abbey suggests that it was still doing good work in the matter of education or, at least, that it played an important part in the life of the better class families in the diocese.

There was a great dearth in England during years 1315–21, and it is possible that some diminution in fruits and rents may have led to a permission being granted to Romsey to appropriate to the Convent's use the Rectory of Itchenstoke, of which they were Patrons, 6th April, 1317. By appropriation, the Convent obtained the greater tithes for their own use, the lesser ones being left for the Vicar, who should be appointed; hence the distinction between rectors and vicars.

REGISTER OF BISHOP JOHN DE PONTOISE.

INJUNCCIONES ABBATISSE DE RUMSEY.

Visitacio Abbatisse et Conventus de Romeseie (1302). The Bishop having found certain things to be corrected, he wills and commands:—First, whereas in the last visitation he ordered that an account should be rendered twice in the year, and at the ending

of the account, the state of the house should be declared by the auditors of the convent or at least by the seniors of the convent, which in the present visitation he has found wholly omitted, he orders under pain of excommunication that such account be rendered, in future once in the year, and at the ending of the same, the state of the house be declared before the whole convent in chapter.

Item, that the convent should rise earlier than they were used to do, and sing Matins and other Hours at the proper hours of the day, so that High Mass should always be celebrated before the ninth hour; all the chaplains are forbidden under pain of suspension to presume to celebrate after the ninth hour, but that they begin Mass at such an hour that they can well celebrate before the ninth hour.

Item, that in receipt and distribution of the rents, two of the most able and discreet ladies be joined to the prioress, by consent of the larger and saner part of the whole convent, and by their counsel the rents be divided between the ladies, and expended in the usual manner.

Item, that all the usual pittances, distributed among the ladies, be distributed without any diminution in future at the usual terms, and especially those pittances which the bishop found subtracted, namely, one of 6*d.* to each lady yearly on the feast of S. Martin, and another of 6*d.* likewise to each lady when blood is let.

Item, that the doors of the cloister and dormitory be more strictly and better kept and closed.

Item, whereas from the bad keeping of the common seal many evils to the house have hitherto happened, as the Bishop has now learnt from experience of the fact, and also may happen unless wholesome remedy be applied, three at least of the discreeter ladies be appointed by the Abbess and the larger and saner part of the convent, to keep the seal, and when any letter shall be sealed with the common seal in the chapter before the whole convent, it shall be read and explained in an intelligible tongue to

all the ladies, publicly, distinctly, and openly, and afterwards sealed in the same chapter, not in corners or secretly as has hitherto been the custom, and signed as it was read, so that what concerns all may be approved by all, which done the seal shall be replaced in the same place under the said custody.

Item, a useless, superfluous, quarrelsome, and incontinent servant and one using insolent language to the ladies shall be removed within a month from the reception of these presents, and especially John Chark, who has often spoken ill and contumaciously in speaking to and answering the ladies, unless he correct himself, so that no more complaints be made to the Bishop.

Item, that the good customs and courtesies hitherto observed among the ladies, as of the pantry, the buttery and the bakery, be in no way lessened (*subtrahantur*) in the future, but from day to day, be kept.

Item, it is forbidden to eat, drink, or spend the night in the town of Romsey with any religious or secular person, and the Abbess shall not grant licence to any religious lady, to the contrary.

Item, the Abbess shall not sell any corrodies or grant any pensions, without asking the counsel and assent of the bishops.

Item, no immovable goods of the Monastery, and especially those nine acres of land with a meadow, which have newly come to their hands, shall be alienated at farm unless to the greater utility of the Monastery, and by the express wish and assent of the whole convent.

All these things shall be read and recited in chapter, before the whole convent, at least once a month until they be all executed, as is expedient.

Dated at Wolvesey, Wednesday next before the feast of S. Peter in the chair (22nd February), 1302.

REGISTER OF BISHOP HENRY WOODLOCK.

DECRETUM DE ROMESEY [folio 153].

1.—Mass of the Blessed Virgin and Mass in the infirmary, celebrated daily, shall be begun so early in the morning that the ladies in the same shall not be at all hindered from other Masses to be sung solemnly—and at the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, eight nuns at least "in dies intitulentur," who shall come to Mass before the beginning of the Kyrie, without delay, so that they who come later (*tardius*) to the said Mass shall be subjected to the same penalty as those who do not observe silence. And lest, in hearing Masses, it happen that the devotion of the nuns be hindered by a concourse of secular persons, we, on pain of greater excommunication, firmly prohibit permission to seculars of any condition or sex, living within the precincts of the Monastery, to enter to hear Mass celebrated in the infirmary, as they have hitherto been accustomed to do.

2.—Item, the Convent shall rise earlier than is accustomed for the office of matins, and shall sing the other canonical hours at the due and stated times, so that High Mass be commonly celebrated before the ninth hour; their chaplains are forbidden, on pain of suspension, to celebrate after the ninth hour, except on fast days.

3.—Following the footsteps of Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, because of the continual sojourn of seculars, we find the tranquillity of the nuns to be much disturbed and scandals to arise in your monastery, *ordered* (on pain of excommunication and deposition of the Abbess, Prioress, and greater officials of the Convent, if they be found disobedient or negligent in this), that secular women, married and single (*coniugatas et solutas*), staying there, from the time of the receipt of the presents, shall be wholly removed from the Abbey without hope of return.

4.—Recalling to their memory, the statutes of John, the Bishop's predecessor, *ordered* that the officials and ministers of the house render an account of their administration once in the year, before auditors specially appointed for this, and at the ending

of the same, the state of the house shall be declared before the whole Convent in Chapter.

5.—Because it is fitting that what concerns all be approved of by all, *ordered* that the common seal be kept under three keys in the keeping of three ladies. And when any letter is to be sealed with it, it shall first be read in chapter in an intelligible tongue, before sealing and after, publicly and openly, on pain of deposition of the abbess, prioress, sub-prioress, and elders of the convent. No alienations of lands, possessions, liveries, or other greater things shall be made without the bishop's license, specially sought and obtained.

6.—According to the ordinance of the bishop's predecessors, *ordered* that in receipt and distribution of rents, two of the most able and discreet ladies be joined with the prioress, by whose advice the said rents shall be expended, in the accustomed way; usual pittances to the ladies, to be distributed without any diminution, and especially those which our predecessor found withdrawn (*subtractas*), viz., one of 6*d.* which each lady used to receive when blood is let, and one of 6*d.* which used to be distributed, to each lady yearly, at the feast of S. Martin.

7.—The doors of the cloister (of) the dormitory shall be kept at the proper hours and closed, and especially after compline, all seculars being excluded; no lady shall eat, drink or spend the night in the town of Romsey outside the precincts of the monastery. Item, *cum Religionis perfectio ad caritatis opera finaliter ordinetur*, *ordered* that for digging a grave and preparation of the coffin for burial of the body of a nun who has died, and for pittances to the sisters on the day of burial, the goods of the deceased nun shall not be expended, because she ought not to have private property, but the common goods of the church shall be spent. Other good customs shall be observed, as of bread and beer, so that bread shall be wholly brought back to the proper weight and quality and quantity hitherto used.

8.—Because we have found your church burdened by the multitude of nuns, *ordered* on pain of deposition of the abbess,

prioress and other officials, that no nun be received among you until your *collegium* be of the number first appointed.

9.—Item, because they are unaware that, amongst the vows of Religion, the vow of obedience is the greater, *ordered* that the younger ladies reverently obey the seniors and especially *suis presidentibus*, and if any rebels are found they shall be *atrius corripiantur* in chapter before all, and the fault growing, the penalty of disobedience shall be increased. No nun who has been tacitly or expressly professed, and has come to legal age, *a tractibus communibus per contemptum excludatur.*

10.—Item, *ordered* that sufficient food be provided, according to the possibilities (*facilitates*) of the monastery, for the sick who cannot use the common food, by the Abbess and others appointed to the care of the sick, and that those who are still well (*sane*), now these, now those, not always the same, should be called to the Abbess's table for recreation.

11.—There shall be an entrance into the garden by a gate or postern for the sick, in an inconspicuous place (*in loco non suspecto*), for their recreation and solace. Nuns who have been bled shall be allowed to enter the cloister if they wish. Chaplains of the Abbey shall be prevented (*arceantur*) frequent access to the infirmary, by the Abbess and other presidents, so that they shall not come there without necessary cause or unless specially called by the Abbess and other presidents of the order.

12.—There shall not be in the dormitory with the nuns any children, either boys or girls, nor shall they be led by the nuns into the choir while the divine office is celebrated. Curtains shall be removed for ever from before the beds of the nuns.

13.—No keepers of woods, reapers, or beadles (*messores aut bedelli*) shall be appointed for life, but at the will of the Abbess and steward as appears most expedient. No women servants shall remain unless of good conversation and honest. Pregnant, incontinent, quarrelsome women and those answering the nuns contumaciously, all superfluous and useless servants, to be removed within a month from the time of the receipt of these presents.

All these premisses, the Bishop has caused to be translated into French, that they may more easily understand them; they shall be recited before all, in Chapter, in the week next (week) after the Feast of S. Michael, and in Septuagesima, and on the fourth weekday (*ebdomada*) after Easter, and the first weekday (*ebdomada*) of July, and inquiry shall then be made of the non-observance of the same, and those thus guilty shall be punished by the penalties, inserted in these statutes, or by other penalties when none are certainly expressed.

Sealed. Dated at Dounton, 23rd March 1311, sixth year of consecration.

Memorandum that 10th March, 1310, at Esshere, the Abbess and Convent of Romsey were written to, for a visitation of Henry, Bishop of Winchester, on Monday next after the Feast of S. Gregory, Pope, in the accustomed manner.

REFERENCES.

Parliamentary Writs and Surveys.
The Episcopal Registers of Winchester.

CHAPTER VII.

A.D. 1333—1349.

THE GREAT PESTILENCE.

"A voice in Rama has been heard; much weeping and crying has sounded throughout the countries of the globe."

Bp. William de Edyndon's Pastoral Letter.

Chapter VII.

THE GREAT PESTILENCE.

THE last year of Bishop John de Stratford's Episcopate, 1333, witnessed the election of a new Abbess of Romsey. Few events of great importance are on record during this lady's life, but at her death a great blow fell upon the Abbey from which it never wholly recovered.

The preceding Abbess, Sybil Carbonel, died on the 1st of June, 1333, and was buried eight days later. Three weeks after her death the nuns gathered in the Chapter House according to custom, and settled on the 25th June as the day for the election of a new Abbess. The election of the head of a house was a weighty business, and sometimes occupied many weeks. The licence of the King had to be obtained, and no doubt, when the Chapter met on the 25th June, some persons had already journeyed to and from the Court to announce the death and obtain the *congè d'élire*, or licence to elect.

All members of the Convent who had a voice in Chapter were summoned to the election ; on this occasion it was found that Sir Richard de Lusteshull, canon and prebendary, and some of the nuns were absent. The other canon and prebendary of Romsey, however, Master Richard de Chaddesley, was present in his own name and also as proxy for the remaining prebendary, Master Robert de Stratford, the incumbent of Edington Rectory. With

Master Richard were ninety-one nuns—they are all named, and the full list with the officers is printed below.

A letter from the Prioress Agnes de Stanlegh, describing the election for the Bishop's information, gives a graphic account of the customary proceedings. "The word of God having been propounded, the grace of the Holy Spirit devoutly invoked, the hymn 'Veni creator spiritus' sung, and the constitutions of general councils read, 'Quia propter Indempnitatibus monasteriorum, etc.,' a warning was given to all under suspension and interdict, and all who had no right in the election, to go out, which was done by Master John Leech, who was constituted spokesman. The election was then proceeded with."

There were three methods of election, says Dr. Gasquet, (1) by individual election, "electio per viam scrutinii," each member of the community voting separately and secretly, (2) by the choice of a certain number, or even of one eminent person to elect in the name of the community, a mode of election known as "electio per compromissum," and (3) by acclamation or the uncontradicted declaration of the common wish of the body.

All three methods were used or attempted at one time or another by the sisters of Romsey, but on this occasion they chose the first. Prioress Agnes continues: "They unanimously chose as 'Scrutatores' Master Richard de Chaddesley, prebendary of the Church, Cecily de Blontesdone and Agnes de Brommore, nuns, to whom they gave power to take the votes of all, secretly and singly, first their own, and then those of the others present, reduce them to writing and declare them. The 'Scrutatores' retired to one part of the Chapter House, associating with themselves Master John de Leech and Master John Ace, notary public, by consent of all present, who took the votes, reduced them to writing and published them. This being done Alice de

[J. Buckler, 1806.

THE THREE ENTRANCES.

Broadlands Collection.

Persshete and Alice Mounceaux, nuns, previously absent, though called to the election, entered the Chapter House and consented to the premisses. The greater part of the whole Chapter and Convent had voted for Joan Icthe, thirty years old and more, born of lawful wedlock, expressly professed, whom Agnes de Stanlegh solemnly elected."

"After singing Te Deum laudamus," the prioress continues, "we carried the elect, bashful and holding back, to the high altar of our church, and laid her there; the same psalm and a certain prayer having been said over her, immediately the election was declared before the clergy and people by Master Walter de Penes, clerk, first in the choir and afterwards in the nave. The election having been presented to the elect by Cecily de Blontesdone, she was asked to consent to it on the Saturday following, 26th June, on which day after much persuasion she consented, and the King (Edward III) gave his consent."

The business, however, was by no means as yet complete. Richard de Chaddesley, acting for the Bishop as Vicar-General, orders the official of the Archdeacon on 4th July, 1333, to cite any opposers to appear at Andover on the first lawful day after the feast of St. Margaret (20th July), which day was a Wednesday. The Prioress and Convent appeared by their Proctor, Thomas de Wordy, the Abbess-elect appeared in person, and no opposers seem to have presented themselves. The deeds of the election, eight in all, were produced, and the next legal day after the feast of the Blessed Mary Magdalene (22nd July) was appointed for the publication of them, which, after long and solemn discussion, was done, and the election confirmed. Immediately the *Te Deum* was sung, prayer was made over the Abbess, and she took the oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop and his successors and ministers on the holy gospels before the high altar of the Church of Andover.

This was on 23rd July, but it was the 3rd of September before the Bishop gave orders that Joan Icthe should be inducted into corporal possession of the monastery, and should have assigned to her a stall in choir and a place in chapter in the accustomed manner; at the same time the Bishop ordered the prioress and convent to be obedient to the Abbess as members to the head, giving her obedience, reverence, and honour in all due things as is fitting.

SISTERS OF ROMSEY
AT THE
ELECTION OF ABBESS JOHANNA ICTHE, 25TH JUNE, 1333.

Agnes de Stanlegh, prioress.
Joan Gernays, sub-prioress.
Alice de Roppeligh, sextoness.
Joan Icth, cellaress.
Olive Beaufou, chantress.
Agnes de Brommore.
Cecily de Blontesdone.
Ela Croupes.
Ellen Baa.
Alice de Roucestre.
Agatha de Wynton.
Katharine de Grymstede.
Beatrice Beaufou.
Amice Bluet.
Margaret Prime.
Agnes Beaufou.
Alice de Waltham.
Sarra Okly.
Alice Brembelsshete.
Margaret de Tydeleshide.
Lucy Gower.
Maud de Grimstede.
Margiry Deneys.
Margaret Poyntz.
Amice Malure.
Joan de Farnlington.
Amice de Forstebury.
Joan de Compton.
Alice Levynton.
Katharine Joevene.
Joan Poyntz.
Joan Beaufou.
Agatha Bekk.
Joan Payn.
Beatrice Neyvill.
Isabel de Hameldone.
Margaret FitzWarin.
Amice de Wynhale.
Eugenia Chartres.
Margaret Tracy.
Margaret Warblynton.
Alice de Graveneye.
Katherine de Aysshelonde.
Margiry de Buttesthorn.
Isolda Roches.
Maud Trenchard.

Agnes de Wynton.
Joan de Roppelye.
Agnes Waram.
Hawyse Luffeguave.
Denise Golaffre.
Alice de Wynton.
Isabel de Staunford.
Mary de Roppelye,
Alice de Thuddene.
Margiry Forestir.
Elizabeth Syfrewast.
Joan de Sparkeford.
Margaret Pauncefot.
Margiry atte Rye.
Joan Boyton[er].
Joan Purie.
Isabel Fraunceys.
Julia de Romesye.
Christine Okham.
Emma Doignel.
Maud de Roppelye.
Elizabeth Silvayn.
Christine Brikevill.
Muriele Cotele.
Katharine de Donton.
Margaret de Westover.
Eleanor Rude.
Christine Bromham.
Katharine Warham.
Joan de Totteford.
Joan Carbonel.
Alice Carbonel.
Joan de Enedford.
Edith Eymer.
Alice de Anne.
Constance Wauncy.
Joan de Tystede.
Joan de Wynterbourne.
Katharine Warham.
Alice de Cicestre.
Petronilla de Wendlesworth.
Margaret Fokeram.
Isabel Walraund.
Alice de Persshete.
Alice Mounceaux.

The large number of nuns at this election shows that Romsey had fairly kept up its state from the time of its foundation, when tradition says it numbered a hundred ladies. This tradition is preserved in the words of Peter de Langtoft (who died early in the fourteenth century) concerning King Edgar:—

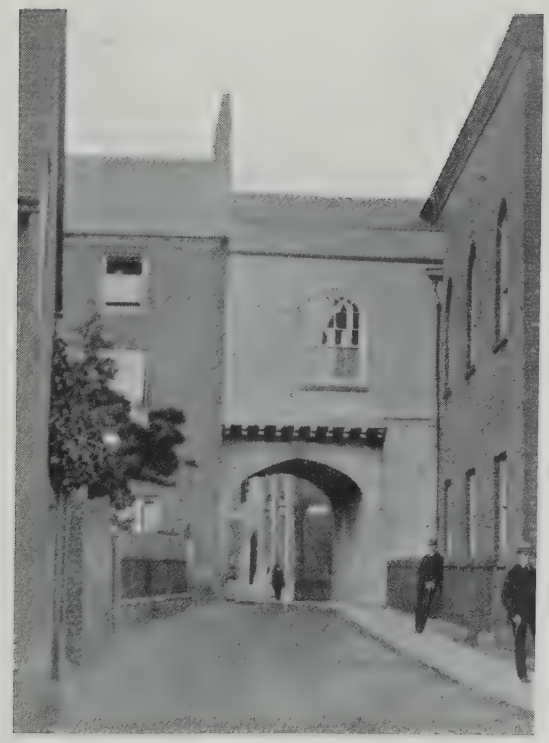
> "Mikille he wirschiped God, and served our Lady;
> The Abbey of Rumege he feffed richely,
> With rentes full gode and kirkes of pris,
> He did ther in of Nunnes a hundreth ladies."

The members of the community here, as in other places, were mainly recruited from the county gentle-folk. If it

were possible to trace these ladies' families, an interesting picture of the country side in the middle ages would be presented, but this is impossible without a wide knowledge of county records, and perhaps impossible at all. A few families may be guessed at. Alice de Brembelsshete, or Bramshot, belonged no doubt to a family of that place who are spoken of both in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Margery de Buttesthorne may have been the daughter of Roger de Buttesthorne of Ringwood. In the latter part of the century (1372) Joan, daughter and heir of Richard de Buttesthorne, was Patron of Minstead in the New Forest. Johanna de Compton—the Patent Rolls, 1343–5, mention a Sir John of the Isle of Wight. Isabella Fraunceys—there was a Mayor of Winchester of this name mentioned in the Charters of Selborne Priory in 1323.

The Grymstedes belonged to Brockenhurst; a Thomas de Grymstede about this date had dealings in respect of the Manor of Terstwood, just below Romsey, and thirty years later John de Grymstede died possessed of Plaitford Manor and holding the wardenship of Milchet Park. Margaret Pauncefote—from early times this family held lands on the west side of Romsey and continued land owners for centuries there. The name has survived in the farm on the road to the Forest—Pauncefoot Hill. A John Pauncevot held lands at Mayhnestone (Mainstone) in 1318.

Johanna Payn—the Payns held land at King's Somborne and at Winchester. Andrew and his son Robert are both spoken of in the early part of the century. Alice de Thuddene—Bishop Woodlock appointed a John de Thuddene his marshal at the beginning of the century, and he was succeeded by his son Walter in Bishop Stratford's time. The former was also the Bishop's bailiff at Waltham. Katharine Warham—Robert Wareham was bailiff of Winchester in 1330, and this family who lived at



THE OUTER GATE.—BEFORE REBUILDING.

A.D. 1886-88.

To face p. 114.]

Hannington gave birth in the next century (1450) to one who became Archbishop of Canterbury (1503—1532). Alice de Persshete was very possibly the daughter of Sir Nicholas de Persshete (of Spurshot) near Romsey, which manor lies just across the valley facing the Abbey. This Knight, says Mr. Baigent, was lord of the manor of Winterslow, Wilts, and was steward of Hyde Abbey, and one of the knights of the shire, 1309—13. Walter de Netheravene, chaplain, granted this gentleman a tenement in Churchstile Street, Romsey, together with 10*s.* annual rent. Julia de Romeseye was doubtless a member of the Romeseye family, well known both in Somerset and Hants, whose pedigree is given in another chapter.

One of the officers of the Convent at this time was a Nicholas de Brayesfeld, or Braishfield as it is now spelt, a village about three miles north-east of Romsey. He is described as having the custody of the gate, in other words the porter. He was a property owner as will appear, and it may be supposed that the actual work of keeping the gate was done by deputy or under-official. The gate stood on the east side of the precincts, facing the Market Place, where a modern arch has been erected in connection with the Congregational Church. A photograph of the gate existing immediately before the building of this modern archway is given on the opposite page.

The custodian of the gate on 26th August, 1331, had a salary which was by no means to be despised. Nicholas de Brayesfeld drew 365 loaves, 365 gallons of the convent ale, 365 loaves for servants, 15*s.* 2*d.* for meals from the kitchen, 5*s.* for a robe, and 19 quarters of bran. A pious wish on the part of the custodian and his wife Emma to have divine service celebrated daily for their souls' health, prompted them to offer to the Abbess and Convent a messuage and twenty-five acres of meadow in Romsey,

together with a release of their right in the gate and its stipend, if the Abbess would find a chaplain to celebrate. There appears to have been some hitch in the matter, perhaps their offer to release their right in the gate proved an illegal act, or was not acceptable to the Convent; and on 16th July, 1332, they offered three and a half acres of land and two and a half acres of meadow in Romesye to one Simon de Dounamene, a chaplain, to celebrate divine service daily in the chapel of S. Nicholas in Romsey Abbey, for their good estate in life, and for their souls after death.

Nicholas died within a year or two, but his widow survived him for some years. In 1335 she gave to the Abbess six messuages and certain lands and rents in Romsey to find a chaplain in the Abbey to celebrate Divine Service for the souls of Nicholas, Emma, and all the faithful departed. In the accounts of the King's bailiff, after the Suppression, a farm is spoken of, "with garden, dovecot, land and pasture in Romsey *infra*, which Nicholas Wethers, chaplain, lately occupied as parcel of the chantry of the late Nicholas Braffeld, and which had been granted to John Foster for life." This is also described as "a messuage, between the watercourse running to Towne Mill and the field called Peryton on the east, and Bannyng Street on the west, with a close (two acres) between Romsey felde and the river Teste, a close called parsonage acre between the land near Wodley which John Cocke and William Holme held, and a close (one acre) next the lands of John Kychyner and Nicholas Sedgewyke, and abutting towards the east upon Eve Lane, which messuage and closes formerly belonged to a chantry founded within the monastery church of Romsey by John (? Nicholas) Brashfelde, and lately were in the occupation of John Foster" [17th December, 1544]. On 6th January, 1343, the same Emma obtained a faculty from Bishop Orlton to transfer

the body of her father William from the cemetery into the chapel of S. Nicholas, which she had endowed as a chantry for the benefit of her own soul and the souls of her parents.

The piety and filial regard of this family of the fourteenth century is a pleasing picture, and were it possible to fill in the outline in greater detail, and say who the father William was, and where the Brashfield chantry stood, the picture would be of even greater interest.

A considerable number of Saints besides S. Nicholas were commemorated by the chapels and altars of the Abbey. The patrons, S. Mary the Blessed Virgin and S. Ethelfleda, had altars in the Lady Chapel. This chapel was at first a Norman one, the foundations of which were discovered by the late Vicar of Romsey, the Rev. E. L. Berthon, as already described in a former chapter. The chapel of S. Anne, the mother of Our Lady, was situate either in the choir aisle or transept chapel on the south side, and the chapel of S. Nicholas or the Braishfield chantry may have occupied the other one of these spots.

On the north side in the parish church or nave aisle was the altar of S. Laurence, and at a rather later time when the parish church was enlarged there was erected in it the chantry of S. George. There was also a chapel of S. Peter near the Abbess' lodging, and a chapel of S. Andrew within the Infirmary. About the time of the foundation of the Braishfield chantry Bishop Orlton gave a faculty (6th December, 1334) for celebrating upon a portable altar before the image of S. Catherine. This image stood in the parish church or north aisle of the nave of the Abbey church.

Bishop Edyndon granted (27th October, 1346) a special license to Emma de Braishfield to have masses celebrated in the oratory of her house within the parish of Romsey, to

continue at the Bishop's pleasure. Emma de Braishfield's house was not the only private dwelling in the town which had an oratory; Robert Martyn also owned a house with a like provision, and he too obtained from Bishop Edyndon (26th January, 1347) a license, "to have masses celebrated in the oratory of his house in the town of Romeseye, in the presence of his wife and their free family, by a fit priest, without prejudice to the parish church, or the right of any other, during a year only." The Martyns belonged to Yeovil, and this Robert appears to have been the second husband of Margaret *née* Byset, the widow of John de Romeseye, through whom he occupied the manor of Rockbourne near Fordingbridge. No doubt this house in Romsey belonged as an inheritance of the Romeseye family, who held property here for several centuries.

The advent, in 1349, of the Great Pestilence, or Black Death as it is commonly known, brought desolation to Romsey Abbey in common with other communities throughout the country. [1] It is supposed that this awful scourge originated in China in 1334. Thirteen millions of persons are believed to have been swept away by the floods of the Yang-tsi or destroyed by hunger and disease, and according to the rumours of the time it was the corruption of unburied corpses which caused the Black Death. In China the pestilence ended in 1342, but not so for the rest of the world; it spread, and being a soil poison found favourable conditions throughout mediæval Europe. This was the age of feudalism and walled towns, with a cramped and unwholesome manner of life on inhabited spots of ground, choked with the waste matter of generations.

The monasteries were especially favourable spots. Within the walls, under the floor of the chapel or cloisters,

[1] From Creighton's *History of Epidemics in Great Britain.*

were buried not only generations of monks, but often the bodies of princes, notables, and of great ecclesiastics. Again, in every parish the house of the priest would have stood close to the church and churchyard. Thus the pestilence spread slowly but with a certainty, which would alone have made it terrifying, taking a whole twelve months to pass from Dorset to Yorkshire, and exhibiting its greatest power in walled town, monastery, and in the neighbourhood of churchyards.

But whilst this pestilence was a soil poison, it is not to be supposed that it was not directly contagious, it was virulent, and so contagious that those who touched the dead, or even the sick, were incontinently infected that they died, and both penitent and confessor were borne together to the same grave. It is supposed that the population of England at this time was not more than five millions, and that half of this total succumbed. One half of the clergy in the diocese of York died, and in Hampshire some 200 clergy perished.

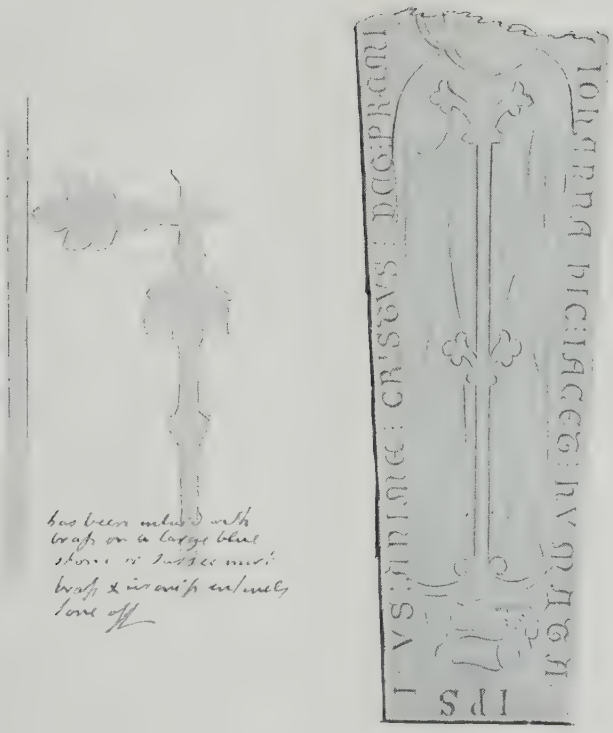
The pestilence entered a port in Dorset, said to be Weymouth, about August, 1348. Bishop William de Edyndon wrote an eloquent letter to the Prior of S. Swithun's, Winchester, on the 24th of October following, and sent similar letters throughout the diocese:—

[1] "William, by Divine providence, Bishop, to the Prior and Chapter of our church of Winchester, health, grace, and benediction. A voice in Rama has been heard; much weeping and crying has sounded throughout the countries of the globe. Nations deprived of their children in the abyss of an unheard plague, refuse to be consoled because, as is terrible to hear of, cities, towns, castles, and villages, adorned with noble and handsome buildings, and wont, up to the present, to rejoice in an illustrious people, in their wisdom and counsel, in their strength,

[1] *The Great Pestilence*, Dr. Gasquet.

and in the beauty of their matrons and virgins; wherein too, every joy abounded, and whither, too, multitudes of people flocked from afar for relief; all these have been already stripped of their population by the calamity of the said pestilence, more cruel than any two-edged sword. And into these said places now none dare enter, but fly afar from them as from the dens of wild beasts. Every joy has ceased in them; pleasant sounds are hushed, and every note of gladness is banished. They have become abodes of horror and a very wilderness; fruitful country places, without the tillers thus carried off, are deserts and abandoned to barrenness. And news most grave which we report with the deepest anxiety, this cruel plague as we have heard, has already begun to afflict the various coasts of the realm of England. We are struck with the greatest fear lest, which God forbid, the fell disease ravage any part of our city and diocese. And although God, to prove our patience, and justly to punish our sins, often afflicts us, it is not in man's power to judge the Divine counsels. Still it is much to be feared that man's sensuality, which, propagated by the tendency of the old sin of Adam, from youth inclines all to evil, has now fallen into deeper malice and justly provoked the Divine wrath by a multitude of sins to this chastisement.

"But because God is loving and merciful, patient, and above all hatred, we earnestly beg that by your devotion He may ward off from us the scourge we have so justly deserved, if we now turn to Him humbly with our whole heart. We exhort you in the Lord, and in virtue of obedience we strictly enjoin you to come before the face of God, with contrition and confession of all your sins, together with the consequent due satisfaction through the efficacious works of salutary penance. We order further that every Sunday and Wednesday all of you, assembled together in the choir of your monastery say the seven Penitential psalms, and the fifteen gradual psalms, on your knees, humbly and devoutly. Also on every Friday, together with these psalms, we direct that you chant the long litany, instituted against pestilences of this kind by the Holy Fathers, through the Market Place of our City


has been inlaid with brass on a large blue stone it has been much worn & is quite entirely gone off
IVSTITIE : CRISTVS : DOCTRINA
IOHANNA PICHTHE : IN ORDINE

COFFIN LID OF ABBESS JOAN ICTHE, A.D. 1349.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 120.]

of Winchester, walking in procession together with the clergy and people of the city. We desire that all should be summoned to these solemn processions and urged to make use of other devout exercises, and directed to follow these processions in such a way that during their course they walk with heads bent down, with feet bare, and fasting; whilst with pious hearts they repeat their prayers and, putting away vain conversation, say as often as possible the Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary. Also that they should remain in earnest prayer to the end of the Mass, which at the end of the procession we desire you to celebrate in your church."

But the diocese did not escape, nor did the Abbey of Romsey. The Abbess Johanna Icthe died, and the rather plainly cut coffin slab, still to be seen at the east end of the Church, probably commemorates her death. Some few years ago the faint outline of the figure, with a dog at her feet, under a cross lying above her could be traced. The accompanying sketch, made in the early part of the nineteenth century, exhibits the condition of the stone at that date. There are the remains of the surrounding inscription still to be seen, which is as follows:—

"Johanna hic jacet humata
Ipsieus anime Christus det premi. . . ."

A later hand has cut in the middle of the slab, "Johanna, Abbatissa de Romeseye, cir. 1349."

Besides the Abbess, at least one of the Prebendaries, Richard de Lusteshull, and also two Vicars, Nicholas de Boteleston and William de Bures, died, the latter only surviving his appointment for two months; and of the nuns no doubt a large proportion. The pestilence, and the troubles which came in its train, proved fatal to the Convent. It has been observed by Dr. Gasquet that whilst at the election of Abbess Johanna in 1333, there were ninety nuns; in 1478 their number is found reduced to eighteen, and they never rose above twenty-five until their final suppression.

It is impossible to read over the list of sisters given on a previous page and not to be moved with pity at the thought of how many of them were suddenly cut off; nor can one but be struck with the prophetic fitness of the text on which Bishop Orlton preached in the Chapter House at his visitation of the sisters fifteen years before, on the 28th of November, 1334: "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage." The grief, terror, and desolation of the country at large was thus shared by the Convent of Romsey. Doubtless amongst this large community there were found noble and holy women who met the trial with courage and resignation, and possibly the inscription on her tomb is intended to show how nobly the Mother behaved in the midst of her daughters, and how she was looked upon as one of those whom the Heavenly Bridegroom would welcome amongst the guests at the marriage feast, giving them their reward.

REFERENCES.

Episcopal Registers.
Patent Rolls.
Creighton's History of Epidemics.
Gasquet's Great Pestilence.
Winchester Cathedral Chartulary.

CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 1130—1540.

THE CLERGY.

"The Church of the fourteenth century shrivelled into a self-seeking secular priesthood."

History of the English People.—J. R. GREEN.

Chapter VIII.

THE CLERGY.

ONE or more clergy were attached to monastic establishments of women, who celebrated divine service for the sisters. In the case of a large monastery like Romsey very ample provision was made, from early times, for a staff of clergy. Many references to these officers of the convent, beginning in the twelfth century and continuing down to the suppression of the Monastery in the sixteenth century, have survived. The earliest mention of Romsey clergy occurs in a deed of Abbess Hadwisa, c. 1130, in which four Presbyters—Robert, John, Roger, and Admundus—appear as witnesses together with Gilbert the Deacon, and the "clericuli (perhaps clergy in minor orders) of Rumesia, Philip, Walter, Osbert, and the other Osbert, Nicholas." A little later under Abbess Juliana, c. 1171, the Chaplain Alan, and Randolph the Chaplain of the Abbey, are mentioned. In the early part of the thirteenth century, Ralph and Simon his brother and Richard de Mannestun are spoken of as Presbyters, and about the same time Walter Galne and Adam are described as Chaplains. In a deed of Abbess Cecilia (1238–47), John de Romeseia and Adam appear described as Canons of Romesye. The former was also Rector of Edyndon, Wilts, and the latter was Rector of S. Laurence, Romeseye.

From later references to the [1] Canons of Romsey, it is evident that there were three Prebendal stalls in the Abbey. One is called the Canonry and second Prebend in the conventual church of Romsey, to which was annexed the Prebendal Church of Edyndon in the Salisbury Diocese. Another is described as the Prebend of the Parish Church of S. Laurence the Greater, in the house or church of the Monastery of Romsey; to this was attached the Church of Tymesbury, situate about two miles higher up the valley of the Test, and also the Chapel of Immere or Imber, lying in a hollow of the great chalk plateau four miles south of Edyndon, or Edington, Wilts. The remaining Prebend is spoken of as the co-portion of S. Laurence, and to it were attached certain rents at Sydmanton in North Hampshire, near Newbury, Berks. Each of the Prebendaries had a stall in choir and a voice in chapter, and they regularly exercised their rights at the election of an abbess, voting either in person or by proxy.

NON-RESIDENCE OF PREBENDARIES.

It may be doubted if the rectors of Edington served their cures in person. An Edward de Overton was the cleric at Edington in the time of Prebendary John de Romesey, 1294, and there was a succession of these vicars or curates-in-charge.

Prebendary John de Romesey was appointed 1293–4, having been recommended by Bishop Pontoise to the Abbess and Convent in 1292. He gave to the Abbey, soon after his appointment, a ploughland of fifty acres, situate in Terstwode or La Waude, worth two marks a year, which appears to have been his entire property in land. He was no doubt a member of the family of Romesey, who for several generations held property in the neighbourhood. His predecessor, John de Berwick,

[1] For the succession of clergy *vide* "List of officers."

EDINGTON CHURCH, WILTSHIRE.

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appointed in 1286, held Prebends in York, Lichfield and London, was Rector of Agmondersham, and was also Dean of Wimborne Minster, where he lies buried. A marble Altar tomb, now laid flat in the south aisle of the choir there, has an eighteenth century plate inserted, which records the traditional belief that it was formerly erected to his memory, a tradition supported by Leland.

As in the case of Edington, so with Romsey, the Rectors or Prebendaries did not minister within the parish and convent, and up to 1321 the Church of S. Laurence was probably served by Chaplains, but in that year a distinct provision was made for a permanent and resident Vicar. The non-residence of Rectors was an evil dealt with by the Lateran Council (1213), and the English Bishops would seem to have insisted upon the appointment of Vicars in these cases. There are three entries in Bishop Asser's register, which give a full account of the "ordination" as it is called, of the vicarage of Romsey.

On the 9th September, 1321, the Bishop appointed a perpetual vicarage in the prebendal church of Romsey, with the consent of Master James de Florencia and Nicholas de Maydenstane, Canons and Prebendaries, and also of the Abbess and Convent, patrons of the said prebends. On the 11th September he instituted Henry de Chulmarke as Vicar, who was presented to the vicarage by the two Prebendaries. By this deed the Bishop reserved the right of taxing the funds belonging to the Prebends, for the benefit of the Vicarage. On the 18th of November in the next year, 1322, a deed was drawn up setting out in full the provision made for the Vicar and his successors—"It is settled and agreed that the said Vicar and his successors are to receive, every day, two corrodies, (*i.e.*, an allowance of food and drink or equivalent money payment,) from the Abbacy of the said Conventual Church, the same as two

Nuns of the said house would receive, also the tithes of flax, hemp, apples, pigs, geese, cows, milk, cheese, calves, colts, pigeons, charcoal, sales of produce, garden curtilages, and of eggs, confessions and funeral fees and legacies, (legacies to the chancel and fabric of the said Prebendal Church and heriots, alone excepted,) also two cartloads of hay from the meadow called Smalemead, and all the oblations and obventions at the altar of S. Laurence and elsewhere in the same church. The said Vicar and his successors are to discharge all Archidiaconal burdens of the incumbency and also the extraordinary burdens of the tithe taxed as the Vicar's portion. Moreover the said Vicars are to provide and maintain the books and documents of the church, and keep the houses in repair, but the said Prebendaries and their successors are to maintain and repair, in all respects, the chancel of the aforesaid Prebendal Church."

Bishop William of Wykeham, who was zealous in his oversight of the Diocese, issued a commission on 15th March, 1372, to Thomas de Sheptone, Canon of Wells and John Uphulle, Rector of Havant, to ascertain the annual value of the impropriate Church of Romsey, with a view to adjust the Vicar's portion. In this Bishop's register the Prebendal Church is described as in three portions :—

	Portion.	Tax.
1. W. de Perham.	43 marcs [or £28. 13*s.* 4*d.* = p.d.v. £688.[1]]	4 marcs, 4*s.*
2. R. de Maydenstane.	30 marcs [or £20 = p.d.v. £480.]	40*s.*
3. Abbess and Convent.	16 marcs [or £10. 13*s.* 4*d.* = p.d.v. £256]	21*s.* 4*d.*

out of which the Vicar is to receive 18 marcs [or £12, a marc being 13*s.* 4*d.*; = p.d.v. £288].

[1] For comparative money values, see Chapter XI. P.d.v. means present day value, which is here obtained by multiplying by 24, as for moneys of the 13th century.

The same computation is found in Bishop Beaufort's register (1405–1447), and is said to be a copy of the tax of Pope Nicholas[1] (circa 1291): a like return was made to the Crown officials in 1428: and in 1534, just before the suppression, the Prebend was valued at £35. 12*s.* 8*d.* and the Vicarage at £20. 17*s.* 11*d.*, or about £250 at present day value.

The Vicar of S. Laurence does not appear to have been without help; a chaplain is mentioned in Bishop Wykeham's time: and there were at least two chaplains for the nuns. Just before the suppression a reference is made to the Chaplain of the Chapel of S. Andrew within the Infirmary, and to the Chaplain of the Chapel of S. Peter within the Abbey. There is a possible reference to the Chapel of S. Andrew in the Romsey psalter (*circa* 1440), for under 13th May occurs the entry "Dedicacio oratorii S. Andree Apli." Except in the case of confessions, for which special clergy were appointed, the nuns must have been dependent for all ordinary ministrations upon the Chaplains, as the Prebendaries held other offices and were usually non-resident. The only indication of a Prebendal House is found in connection with the third Prebendary or co-portionary of S. Laurence. After the death of Nicholas de Maydenstane the Bishop, on 29th December, 1326, caused his executors to be summoned and enquiries to be made concerning the dilapidations of the houses belonging to this Prebend, but even if the houses were at Romsey and not at Sydmanton, which was connected with this Prebend, the residence of the Prebendary is not certain.

ROYAL CLERKS AND DIOCESAN OFFICIALS.

Some of the incumbents of these Prebends were King's clerks, and were engaged in Court business. *Solomon de*

[1] William de P. and Robert de M. were Prebendaries about that date.

Roffa (1289) may probably be identified with an itinerant Justice of that name, and if so he was involved in the Judicial scandal enquired into in 1290 when King Edward returned from abroad after a three years' absence.

A full account of this business is given in the Red Book of the Exchequer:—"Ralph de Hingham and Solomon of Rochester (*i.e.*, de Roffa) and others were arraigned for homicide, corruption, and extortion in office. At first they made a good defence, but at last, attacked in an unguarded quarter, they were convicted, and each in turn paid the heavy penalty of the Royal displeasure in the shape of exhorbitant fines."

Peter de Galiciano (1333) was a Canon of Agen, as well as of Romsey, and was employed in the King's service beyond the seas in 1328, and in the next year he was commanded by the King to treat with Lady Mary, ladye of Byscaye, and others, for marriage between John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, the King's brother, and Mary, daughter and heiress of John, formerly Lord of Bis-caye. This Peter was provided by the Pope to the Mastership of S. Cross Hospital, Winchester, 13th November, 1332, and according to an old manuscript was blind sometime before his death. He was alive 10th November, 1334, but must have died shortly afterwards. It is not likely that a Court official, and one holding S. Cross Hospital, troubled himself much about Romsey during his short incumbency.

Other Prebendaries held Diocesan appointments, and some of them were great pluralists, holding many lucrative offices. *Gilbert de Middleton* became Prebendary of Edington in 1312; he was, says Mr. Baigent, Canon of S. Paul's, London, and the Bishop's Vicar General, Rector of Ashbury, Berks, which he had resigned in 1308–9, Dean of the Court of Arches, 1312, and official principal to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archdeacon of Northampton

(8th June, 1316), and Prebendary of Wells, Chichester, Lincoln, Sales, Hereford, and of the Collegiate Church of S. Crantock, Cornwall. In 1327 he founded a perpetual chantry of six chaplains in the parish church of Wappenham, Northants, to celebrate mass daily for Edward I and Edward II, and for his own soul, and for the souls of his ancestors, benefactors, and all the faithful departed. Bishop William de Edyndon, to whom he was a benefactor and patron in youth, was not unmindful of him, in as much as he bequeathed 100 marks, or £66. 13*s.* 4*d.*, for aid and augmentation of the chantry of Wappenham. Prebendary Gilbert de Middleton died December, 1330, and could have paid little attention either to Edyndon or Romsey.

Robert de Stratford, his successor, voted at the election of Joan Icthe as Abbess, but it is significant that he voted by proxy. He was a kinsman of John de Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, and became himself Bishop of Chichester on 30th November, 1337. In 1334 the Pope had made provision for him to the Deanery of Wells, void by the consecration of Richard (*i.e.*, R. Aungerville, of Bury) on 19th December, 1333, to the Bishopric of Durham.

The Incumbents of the Prebend of S. Laurence the Greater, Romsey, like those of Edyndon, were pluralists. *James Synobalde of Florence* became Canon on 14th November, 1304. In his register Bishop John de Pontoise uses the following expression: "te admittimus per presentes te que per *annulum* nostrum presencialiter investimus"; the use of the Bishop's ring is not mentioned in the appointment of any other canon of Romsey. He was collated to the Archdeaconry of Winchester, on 31st July, 1304, and died before 1st May, 1325. He went to the Roman Court for the King in 1316, and was Proctor in Convocation for the Bishop who was ill, 1317–18. He was Vicar-General in 1320–1, and held for a time the

rectories of Kemsing, Brightwell, Ivinghoe, and Ewell, and was Canon of Florence.

His successor, *Richard de Chaddesley*, D.C.L., appointed 4th April, 1325, was a Canon of Hereford in 1333, and also of Salisbury. He exchanged his Romsey Prebend with Peter de Galiciano in 1333, and examined and confirmed the appointment of Joan Icthe as Abbess in the absence of the Bishop in the same year. He is called both Vicar-General to the Archdeaconry and Bishop's Chancellor. The Patent Rolls show that he was incumbent of Kemeseye (Worcestershire), for in 1328, 28th December, protection was given him for one year, "and for his servants whom he is sending to Bristol with a boat laden with divers kinds of corn to fetch wines and other victuals for his household." From this document it appears that he was a "King's Clerk."

DISPUTED PATRONAGE.

Whilst pluralism and non-residence tended to estrange the Prebendaries from the Convent, disputed rights of patronage may well have made the breach even wider. The Abbess and Convent were the true patrons, but special circumstances from time to time gave the patronage into other hands, the King or Pope claiming the right to present. Appointments made by King or Pope, if and when successful, may be supposed to have brought clergy into connection with the Abbey who had no knowledge of Romsey, and who would be unlikely to take much interest in the sisters. These claims to present do not appear to have been very successful, but they produced a good deal of confusion, and on one occasion at least a very complicated situation. For instance Geoffrey le Scrope, son of the Chief Justice of the King's Bench of that name, was inducted as Prebendary of S. Laurence the Greater in Romsey, 3rd July, 1335; but the King appears to have

presented one of his clerks, John de Eccleslde or Eccleshall on 9th July in the same year, on the plea of a vacancy of the Abbey in the time of his grandfather, when, the Abbey being in the King's hands, the right of patronage fell to the Crown. The King's patent is duly entered in Bishop Orlton's register, but no account of an institution or induction, if it was ever made, has survived, on the contrary, there is an elaborate confirmation of Geoffrey le Scrope's appointment under the date of 12th July.

In 1346 the Pope made reservation of this Prebend for John Wawayn, Rector of Brannspath in the diocese of Durham, on its voidance by the consecration of William de Edyndon as Bishop of Winchester. John Wawayn, however, died before obtaining possession.

Much confusion arose at this time as to who possessed the Prebend. The Pope had made provision for the appointment of Andrew de Offerd or Ufford as far back as 1344, if not in 1343. According to one account, Andrew de Offerd claimed the Prebend on the death of Peter de Galiciano. Provision, however, did not mean possession, and several persons had in the meantime succeeded.

In 1348 the Pope appears to have given the Prebend to William de Farlee or Farlegh, but in 1349 he is found making a decree at the request of the King validating the collation and provision made to Andrew de Offerd, and the latter presented to the vicarage in this year. William de Farlegh appears at the same date as Canon of Salisbury and Rector of Hurslee, and very possibly succeeded on Andrew de Offerd's death, the date of which is unknown. This is likely because Walter de Sevenhampton, who was appointed Prebendary in 1362, obtained Papal confirmation in 1363, and his collation is spoken of as taking place on the death of William de Farlegh.

In this document the old dispute about the patronage is referred to, and a reference is made to a suit between William and Andrew de Offerd, and to a doubt having arisen whether the new appointment was not in consequence reserved to the Pope, on account of which Walter de Sevenhampton, to secure himself, obtained Royal confirmation. This Walter, it may be worth observing, had been Warden of the Edyndon Chantry for a year, 1357–58, and had in 1370 exchanged the benefice of Old Alresford (worth £33. 6*s.* 8*d.*) with John Turke for that of Michelmersh, resigning about the same time the Church of S. Martin, Winchester.

A similar case of Papal provision and confusion arose in the case of the Edyndon Prebend. In 1337 John de S. Paul was appointed, in the next year he exchanged his Prebend with Gilbert de Bruera for Canonries and Prebends of York and Lichfield, and afterwards exchanged that of Lichfield and the Church of Sutton in the Diocese of Salisbury with Alan de Conyngesburghe for the Provosty of Wells. In the meantime the Pope had made provision of Edyndon to Robert de Turre de Adria, a Papal writer, on the ground that the last Prebendary, Robert de Stratford, was a Papal Chaplain. This gordian knot was cut by the decease of the Papal writer, and the Pope permitted the various appointments to stand.

This settlement took place in 1344, and Gilbert continued until his resignation in 1351, when John de Edyndon, nephew of William de Edyndon, Bishop of Winchester, was appointed. He held the Prebend for a few months only, from 4th June to 29th October, when he resigned. This John was made Master of S. Cross in 1346, was Rector of Cheriton in 1347, and Rector of Farnham, and held a Prebend of Saint Pauls in 1366. The Bishop can hardly have approved of his nephew, a mere lad who mis-

used the funds of Saint Cross and was compelled to resign by William of Wykeham, soon after he became Bishop in 1368. John was cited to appear in the Bishop's Court for having embezzled the materials purchased by his predecessor for rebuilding the chancel of the Church of Farnham, of which he was then Rector. No more appointments were made to Edyndon by the Abbess and Convent, as Bishop William de Edyndon of Winchester founded a chantry there and became patron. The Wardens of this chantry and their successors, however, continued to take their place as Canons in the Romsey Chapter, for Master William Newton is found taking part in the election of Elizabeth Broke as Abbess in 1478.

THE THIRD OR CO-PORTIONARY PREBEND.

The co-portionary Prebend of S. Laurence ceased to exist about the same time that the patronage of Edyndon passed to the Bishop. Only four names have survived of incumbents of this Prebend, the succession is complete for the period, but only extends from about 1297 to 1351 or 1362.

About 1297, *Robert de Maydenstane* was Prebendary, he also held the Vicarage of Michelmersh, to which he was appointed in 1286 on the resignation of Simon de Nigella, and was besides a Canon of Chichester. Under the constitution of Pope John XII, against pluralities, he was removed from Michelmersh 12th February, 1317. He is described as "late Master of S. Cross" on 9th February, 1321, and he with his brother Nicholas are proceeded against for removing property from the Hospital valued at £100. This brother, *Nicholas de Maydenstane*, became Prebendary of Romsey before 1321, when he presented to the Vicarage as co-patron with James de Florencia, Prebendary of S. Laurence the Greater.

Richard de Lusteshulle followed, and remained Prebendary for nearly twenty-five years, an incumbency exceeding in length that of any of the early Prebendaries. He was ordained Deacon 28th May, 1317, and Priest on 24th September following, and was Rector of Elyndone, Wilts, and collated by the Pope to Romsey in 1325.

At the request of the King, the Pope wishing to promote Sir Richard de Lusteshulle, confers on him the prebendal portion of S. Laurence, without cure, in the conventual church of Romsey, and invests him in the person of Peter de Nuttelye his Proctor. Dated at Coulesfield, Thursday, 15th August, 1325.

The register of Bishop Stratford, however, records another appointment; one Richard de Ayremine was admitted by the Bishop's commissioners to the Prebend of S. Laurence, at the presentation of the Abbess and Convent, and the induction took place the same day, but by proxy. The institution was sealed with the seal of the Dean of Winchester because the seals of the commissioners were unknown to many. Dated 25th August, 1325. The subsequent events are explained by the abstracts of documents in the Cathedral Chartulary,[1] which are as follows:—

"Bulla domini pape directa priori Wyntonensi H. de Iddesworth et magistro Nicholao de Fractis ad faciendum dominum R. de Lusteshulle de pacifica possessione prebende de Romeseye gaudere.

"The petition of Richard de Lusteshull, canon of the church of the monastery of Romesey, in which are and used to be secular canons, contains that although he was canonically promoted to the prebend of S. Laurence, accustomed to be assigned to secular clerks, then vacant by the death of Nicholas de Madeneston, by authority of apostolic letters, and has for some time peacefully

[1] *Winchester Cathedral Chartulary*, Vol. I, Pt. 1.

possessed it, nevertheless, because Richard de Ermyne clerk of the Diocese of York falsely asserting the said prebend to be vacant, has caused himself to be presented to the bishop of Winchester for the said prebend, vacant neither by right or in fact, by the Abbess and Convent to whom the presentation, when it is vacant, is known to belong by old, approved, and hitherto peacefully observed custom, and on pretext of this presentation he has hindered, disturbed and molested Richard de Lusteshull in his possession of the prebend, and Richard appeals to the apostolic see. The pope has committed the cause to Master Gaucelin de Cassanhis [Gashanchis] 'auditori causarum nostri pallacii,' to hear and determine, who at the instance of a former Master de Vrigge, proctor of Richard, appearing before him, pronounced the case to have properly devolved on the Apostolic court and caused the said Richard de Ermyne to be cited. He did not appear. Pronounced and declared that the presentation of Richard de Ermyne was void. Confirmation by the Pope, of this sentence; Richard de Lusteshull shall enjoy the peaceful possession of the prebend. Dated at Avinon 12 Kal. January, 13th year of his pontificate (Pope John)."

ORDER FOR INDUCTION.—"Nicholas de Fractis, and others, deputies from the Apostolic see, to the Abbess and Convent of Romsey and all others concerned. They are to induct Richard de Lusteshull into possession of the said canonry or prebend of S. Laurence within six days, and in no wise permit him to be molested in the same; Richard de Ermyne is admonished that this will take place. Sentence of excommunication on each person, suspension of the Convent, and interdict on the Church, if they hinder Richard de Lusteshull or help Richard de Ermyne. Richard de Lusteshull or his proctor shall make a copy of the premisses for the Convent, if they demand it, at their charges.

"The Abbots of Nettele, Beaulieu, the Priors of Suthewyk, Portesmuthe, and Motesfonte, the Master of the Domus Dei of Southampton, the Prior of 'Ederosi' in the diocese of Salisbury, the rectors of the churches of 'Albæ parochie,' Schyrefeld, Tederle, and Putlesworth, the Priors of S. Ellen and of S. Cross

of Winchester, shall carry out the premisses under pain of excommunication, within six days after they shall be required to do so.

"'Acta et data' in Avinon, in the dwelling-house of the said Nicholas, 1329, 10th February, thirteenth year of Pontificate of John XXII."

The trouble about the house dilapidations has already been referred to. A curious transaction occurred between this Prebendary and the Prior of Saint Swithun's about the year 1331. It appears that Richard de Lusteshull's Rectory of Elyndone paid a pension of 100 shillings to Saint Swithun's for the benefit of the Precentor. To meet this charge Prebendary Richard delivers to the Prior Alexander the fruits of his "portion of Sydemanton" belonging to his Romsey prebend, and the rent of the house, namely, 3 shillings a year; the whole value amounting to 8 marks 3 shillings, or £5. 9*s.* 8*d.* (*i.e.*, present value £65. 16*s.*). He warrants the said fruits and house for five years, if he continues to hold the Prebend. Brother Alexander shall retain to himself and his convent and pay to the Precentor 100 shillings yearly during the said five years, of the said farm of 8 marks 3 shillings and the residue, namely, 9*s.* 8*d.*, he shall pay to the said Richard at Michaelmas yearly in the Church of Saint Swithun. For a very brief period this Prebendary was Master of Saint Cross, and was also Warden of Saint Katherine's Hospital, near the Tower. He presented to the Vicarage in 1334, and probably died by the great pestilence in the early part of 1349, his successor being instituted on 27th June of that year.

John de Nubbelaye was the last incumbent of this Prebend. He obtained it on Papal provision, confirmed by the Crown, on 12th May, and was instituted on 27th June; he presented to the Vicarage on 27th September following. He had been Rector of Alresford for some years. Bishop William de Edyndon shortly afterwards

(8th July, 1351), with the Royal assent, appropriated this Prebend to the use of the Abbey, owing to the poverty and sufferings of the Nuns consequent on the black death. Part of the agreement involved a pension to the Bishopric, which in Bishop Wykeham's time fell into arrears, and a peremptory command for payment was issued. This pension became a subject of enquiry after the suppression. The Bishop of Winchester and his predecessors it was stated had continually enjoyed a sum of 6*s.* 8*d.* going out of the late House or Monastery of Romsey for the appropriation of the Prebend of S. Laurence; it was decreed on 6th February, 1541, that unless proved before the Court of Augmentations, the Bishop ought not to have it.

John de Nubbelaye became Provost of S. Elizabeth's College, Winchester, in 1350. The appointment of a pluralist was contrary to the statutes of the College, but the Papal sanction was granted owing to the income of S. Elizabeth's being too small to be held by itself. He appears to have died 3rd September, 1362, for the Bishop on 29th October of that year issued letters patent for the augmentation of the stipends of the Chaplains and Clerks for John de Nubbelaye's obit:—

"The Provost and Chaplains shall celebrate yearly for ever on 3rd September in the Chapel the obit or anniversary of John de Nubbelaye, formerly Provost of the Chapel, who gave many goods in his lifetime to the relief of the said Chapel; and on the same day the Provost shall distribute one mark of silver for the good of the soul and in memory of John de Nubbelaye, *viz.*, first in masses to be celebrated for his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed by Chaplains of the town of Winchester and Soke, as well religious and secular, 5*s.*; in wax to be bought for four candles to be placed round his tomb, 3*s.* 4*d.*; in a pittance to the Chaplains and Clerks of the Chapel, 3*s.* 4*d.*; distribution amongst the choristers of the Chapel singing on that day, 20*d.*"

The only Prebend which remained according to the terms of its first foundation, was the major portion of S. Laurence; Adam de Hertyngdon was appointed in 1374, and was followed by Nicholas de Wykeham, a kinsman of the great Bishop of that name. He was ordained Acolyth in 1379 and Priest in 1383, and he as Patron presented to the Vicarage of Romsey in 1380; in 1388 he was Master of the Hospital of S. Nicholas, Portsmouth, Prebendary of Waleton in the Collegiate Church of Boseham, of Bedewynde in S. Mary's, Sarum, and of Thorpe in the Collegiate Church of Howeden, as well as Prebendary of Romsey. He was Archdeacon of Wilts in 1396.

Very little remains to be told of the Canons. John Bailey, who exchanged the Rectory of Saint Laurence, Winchester, for the Vicarage of Saint Laurence, Romsey, in 1452, became also Prebendary, either then or a little later. Nicholas Delburge was Prebendary at the Suppression. A note in the Account of the King's Bailiff of the dissolved Monastery in 1539, says: "That the issues of the Prebends of Tymmesbury, Ymber and Romsey, lately granted to Brother Nicholas, travelling in Italy, are to be answered for by Richard Lyster (who dwelt at Stanbridge) and G. Baynton, Knights, and Francis Flemmynge, Esquire, assessed at £16. 6*s*. 8*d*. by the year, which Prebends are granted by letters patent to .... Mason (*i.e.*, John Mason, appointed 1540).

A later patron was Thomas Sharpe of Craneborne, Kent, who put in Edward Foster, a relative probably of the Foster who did so much to bring about the suppression of the Abbey, as will be shown later. The rectory eventually came into the hands of the Dean and Chapter of Winchester.

Romsey could not complain of having insignificant persons thrust upon it, to fill the offices of secular Canons, but it may be doubted if these persons, so frequently employed at the Court by the Sovereign or in Diocesan work by the Bishop, were of much use to the Sisters of the Convent, more often than not they must have been non-resident, and the celebration of Divine Worship was carried on by resident Vicars for the Parish, and by Chaplains for the Convent.

Very little information is available about the Vicars and Chaplains, but notes about some of them are incorporated into other chapters, when their names occur.

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CHAPTER IX.

A.D. 1349—1352.

EDINGTON AND IMBER.

"Hedinton, in Wilts, of ancient tyme was a prebend longging to Rumsey, an Abbaye of Nunnes in Hampshire."

LELAND'S *Itinerary*, Vol. IV, 25.

Chapter IX.

EDINGTON AND IMBER.

THE Black Death left a legacy of troubles behind it, and these troubles were acutely felt throughout the country. Agriculture suffered severely, land went out of cultivation, and cattle wandered untended. Tenants could not be found to occupy farms, and labour was at a premium. The Statute of Labourers was passed with a view to check the high rate of wages and to confine natives to their own part of the country; but it did not meet with unqualified success. The Monasteries, inasmuch as they were great landowners, fell into extreme poverty. "It would appear" says Abbot Gasquet, "that at this time many, if not most, of the religious houses of the Diocese of Winchester were protected and supported by the liberality of Bishop Edyndon and his relatives, whom he interested in the work of preserving from threatened destruction these monastic establishments." Romsey history illustrates the evil plight of the religious houses, and exhibits the paternal care of Bishop Edyndon. There are many documents, enrolled on the Close Roll of 1354, in which the state of the Convent's finance, and the agreements entered into between the Abbess and the Bishop, are described. The wording of the first document, dated 1351, is almost identical, in its commencement, with a similar one relating to S. Mary's, Winchester.

CHARTER OF THE ABBESS AND CONVENT TO BISHOP WILLIAM DE EDYNDON.

He, the Bishop, counted it a pleasing thing mercifully to come to their assistance when overwhelmed with poverty, and when, in these days of increasing ill-doing and social deterioration, they were brought to the necessity of secret begging.

It was at such a time that the same Father, with the eye of compassion, *seeing* that our Monastery was from the first provided with lands and possessions, but that now we and our house (*by* the barreness of our land and the destruction of our woods, *by* the diminution or loss of due and appointed rents, because of the dearth of tenants carried off by the unheard of and unwonted pestilence, *by* the building and repairs of the houses of the Monastery fallen through age and in ruins, *by* necessary and very costly exactions of tenths and other taxes and unsupportable burdens) are depressed by the burden of poverty and misery, to so great a degree, that its means would not suffice for the sustenance of the religious women dwelling therein even on a reduced scale, *perceived* that unless provision were opportunely made by a remedial measure of help, in our need which we now suffer, this our Monastery would fall under the reproach of irreparable desolation.

The same Father perceiving this, and the fervour of his inward charity (by which from early years he was always warmly disposed, with no little devotion, towards our Monastery) now also stirring him, he by the care of his pastoral sympathy, to which we are notoriously indebted, as well as to the affection of his paternal oversight, annexed, incorporated, and united, with the consent of his Chapter, to our proper use for a perpetual possession the Prebend of St. Laurence in our Church of Romsey (which hitherto Sir John de Nubbelye holds, and which is of our patronage), with all its rights and belongings, for the relief of our burdens. And further *for the right* of patronage or advowson of the Prebendal Church of Edyndon, belonging to our Church of Romsey, with the Chapel of Bradley annexed to the said Prebendal Church, in the Diocese of Salisbury, and for

one messuage and two acres of land in Edyngdon, which we were accustomed to consider of little or no value, *given by us* to the said Father and his heirs and assigns, for the purpose of a Chantry of Chaplains, celebrating for ever in the said Prebendal Church, to be founded and endowed by the said Father—*he gave us* the tenements, messuages, lands, rents, and meadows formerly in the possession of John le Rede and others in the town of Romeseye, near to our Monastery and of great use to us, which he had acquired at great cost, together with other things, as appears by the King's Charter, treating thereof.

Our evident insufficiency considered, we are not able to make any worthy temporal return for such immense and gracious benefits; and considering moreover that it is more acceptable to the said Father, who has brought such great relief to our exceeding desolation and has restored or reformed our Monastery, to reap eternal retribution rather than the reward of transitory praise, *we grant* that he participate in all prayer and good offices made in our Monastery for ever. *We grant*, further, that one of the Chaplains of our Monastery, every year on the Feast of St. James, the Apostle, in our conventual church, the Abbess and Convent being present, shall be bound to celebrate solemnly, with note, the Mass "*Salus populi*" for the welfare of the said Father during his life on earth, singing the collect "*Omnipotens sempiterne Deus Qui vivorum et mortuorum*" and other collects for the living as shall seem most fitting. After the said Father's death, every year on his anniversary as the day comes round, the Abbess and Convent shall sing, before Vespers in the Monastery, the office of the dead, namely, *Placebo* and *Dirige*, and on the morrow they shall cause to be solemnly celebrated in presence of all of the Convent who can attend, a Requiem Mass for his soul, and the soul of King Edward when he shall have departed this life, his progenitors, kings of England, and all the faithful departed, with the collect "*Incline Domine aurem Tuam*," another which begins "*Deus Qui inter apostolicos*," and others fitting; moreover that we and our successors may be incited more eagerly and in greater number to be present at the said office and masses, *we grant* that on the days on which Mass for the living and also for the dead

and the anniversary shall be celebrated, the Abbess shall distribute among the religious ladies of the Monastery who are present or who are hindered from attending by sufficient cause, ten marks sterling of the profits of the said lands given to us by the said Father; and to each Chaplain celebrating in our Monastery, presented by the holder of the Prebendal Church of Edyngdon, the Abbess shall pay from the said profits, which we confess to be more than sufficient for all these purposes, a yearly payment of thirteen shillings and four pence for his stipend (which, according to the custom of our Monastery, has been paid hitherto by the holder of the said Prebendal Church), and livery of victuals as of one nun, for the fitting sustenance of the said Chaplain as has been customary, in relief of the accustomed charge of the Monastery in this matter, and so that the holder of the said church may be wholly exonerated from the yearly payment of thirteen shillings and four pence.

If we, or our successors, do not carry out the foregoing, which God forbid, we will that the Bishop of Winchester for the time being may compel us to carry out the same by ecclesiastical censures, and we expressly renounce any appeal or defence on our part: and if we take away or do not fully carry out any part of the foregoing, we grant that we may be bound to pay to the alms of the Bishop one hundred shillings, and in aid of the Holy Land forty shillings sterling, the foregoing to continue in force nevertheless. We bind ourselves, and our successors, to carry out and observe faithfully all the aforesaid, on pain of distraint of our Monastery and all our goods by the Bishop and any other judge, ecclesiastical or secular. In testimony of all which, we have caused our common seal to be affixed to these. Given in our Chapter House, 8th July, 1351.

The Abbess also made grants to John de Edyndon, the Bishop's nephew, and gave him power to make a grant to the warden and chaplains of the newly founded chantry; and her successor, Isabel de Camoys, gave a piece of land for the enlargement of the churchyard. The new rector Walter Scarlet, was instituted on October 28th, 1351, and

Canon John de Edyndon's resignation is dated the following day.

The Papal confirmation is dated 1354, and sums up the whole matter; it confirms the foundation, by William, Bishop of Winchester, in the church of Edyndon, in the diocese of Salisbury, his birth-place (which is a prebend of Romsey and consequently neglected), of a chantry of three chaplains in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, S. Katherine, and All Saints, to whom the church is dedicated, with the consent of Robert Wyville, Bishop of Salisbury, the chapters of Winchester and Salisbury, John of Edyndon, Canon of Romsey, and the Convent of Romsey. It being ordained that one only of the chaplains shall be perpetual, and should be called the warden; and also confirming the subsequent appropriation, made with the consent of the same persons and of Roger, Archdeacon of Salisbury, of the church of Edyndon to the said chantry, and the appointment of three more chaplains. It incorporates a letter of the Bishop dated 20th October, 1351, in which he speaks of founding the chantry to pray for the souls of himself, his father Roger, his mother Amice, his brother John, the royal family of England, and the Bishops of Salisbury and Winchester.

A new and very beautiful church was built by the Bishop in the transitional style from Decorated to Perpendicular, and the work may be compared with that done by him at the west end of Winchester Cathedral. There is a base of late Norman character incorporated in the west respond of the south arcade, which indicates both the style and position of the ancient church.

Leland says that the first stone of the Monastery was laid on the 3rd of July, 1352, and that it was completed six years later. The consecration of the church by Robert Wyville, Bishop of Salisbury, did not take place till 1361,

and changes had come about in the meanwhile. Walter de Sevenhampton had become warden on the last day of February, 1357–8, and had resigned 5th April, 1358; and on the next day John de Ailesbury had been appointed. Edward the Black Prince had, it seems, an especial favour for a particular class of Augustinian monks, known as Bonshommes, of which there was only one establishment in England, *viz.*, at Ashridge in Buckinghamshire; and on his return from the French wars "heartily," as Leland says, "besought the Bishop to introduce this order at Edington, which was accordingly done." Two members were sent from Ashridge to Edington, and the elder of them, John de Ailesbury, became its first head, the warden resigning, but the priests all taking the new order. The House continued till the suppression of the Monasteries, and received many gifts, as may be seen in the beautiful register which now stands on the shelves of the B.M. Library, Lansd. 442.

The church is in excellent preservation. It is cruciform, and a very beautiful screen still separates the chancel, which was reserved for the use of the canons, from the rest of the building, which was used as the parish church.

It must not be supposed that because Romsey Abbey parted with the advowson of Edington all the Convent's interest in the neighbourhood ceased. This was by no means the case; the Abbess remained Lady of the Manor of the whole Hundred of Wharwellesdown, she still held property in the neighbourhood, and continued as the patron of Steeple Ashton, another village some three or four miles north of Edington. This Lordship had been given to the Abbey by Edgar from the first, and the gift had been confirmed by King John; and it would seem that land both in Edington and Steeple Ashton came to the Convent through the same king.

EDINGTON CHURCH, WILTSHIRE.

To face p. 150.]

The Edington Charter is still extant, and so is that of Steeple Ashton; the latter concludes with one of those strange denunciations often attached to charters of that time: "If anyone shall venture rashly to infringe this my grant, and refuse to make satisfaction, let him be dragged down with heavy chains round his neck among the fire-breathing regions of black devils."

The boundaries of Ashton follow; the general line pursues a course "From Semington round by Keevil and Edyndon to the River Biss, then by Merebrook and Southwick (in North Bradley) across to Trowbridge, Hilperton Moor, and back to Semington. The Manor of Edington included the tithings of West Coulston, Baynton, Tinhead, North Bradley, and Southwick. The whole Hundred at the time of the Norman Conquest was under the Abbess' rule, and seventy hides of land or more were the property of Romsey Abbey, which probably represented the two manors of Edendone and Aistone.

An early Court Roll of the Manor of Assheton, *i.e.*, Steeple Ashton, has survived the destruction of the Abbey MSS. And as the preservation of such early rolls is uncommon, it will be worth while giving extracts from it:

An arrear Hundred Court of St. Martin held on Wednesday, on the morrow of St. Nicholas, in the forty-sixth year of the reign of King Henry [i.e., *7th December, 1261.*]

Richard de Tiddolneside complains of Walter Walerand that he, Walter, made an agreement with the said Richard, on Sunday next before the feast of St. Michael, in the forty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry, about the first hour, in the Court of the Abbess of Romsey at Tiddolneside, that the same Walter should pay (render) to Richard, by judgment of trusty (men), all costs which Richard laid out upon the building of houses upon the tenement, of which he placed the said Walter in possession, by the Abbess, before the feast of St. Denis next following; which

he (Walter) did not do, but has hitherto unjustly withheld; although the said Richard found pledges, namely, Ric Sonwini and William Notchaach [wherefrom he did not wish damage or disgrace] for 40*s*., and this he says by sufficient suit.

Afterwards, it is agreed between them that Walter grant, that, unless he pay half of the value of the said costs on the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary, in the forty-sixth year of the reign of King Henry, and the other half at Easter following, the said Richard shall hold, at farm, all the houses and the whole tenement pertaining thereto of the same Walter, for so long a time as the estimators shall estimate by writing the said land to be worth the money, estimated for the costs of the houses, which estimate ought to be made on Sunday next after the feast of St. Nicholas; and afterwards it (*i.e.*, the said land) shall revert to the said Walter.

Hallemote of Aston on Monday, the eve of St. Nicholas, in the forty-sixth year of the reign of King Henry [*5th December, 1261.*]

John Medicus (the doctor) in mercy for grass destroyed by four cows taken in New Croft.

Arrear Hundred Court at Hocktide on the Friday next before the feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle, in the forty-sixth year of the reign of King Henry [*9th June, 1262*].

Richard Horde, tithing-man of Bradely, comes and says that the house of Lucy Hogeman was broken into on the night of Tuesday next after the feast of St. John before the Latin Gate, and there was taken away a coverlet, a linen garment, a sheet and a towel, bread and corn; asked if he had anyone under suspicion, he said no! and on the night of Thursday in the week of Whitsuntide a beehive belonging to Duca, widow of Richard the Miller, was stolen, and he made mention as to the house of Hugh Bokel, which was burnt and he within.

William, the tything-man of West Ashton, comes and says that William de Southwich was very often received at the house of Christina Walcock on the tenement of Roger Agard; made mention of the fire at Bradeley, and of wool plucked from the

sheep of Juliana Sanser, and of three large fleeces of wool, stolen in the bakehouse of John Scheregrove (Shiregreen), and made mention of a medley between Elias, son of Ric Ile, and Walter, son of Walter the Theign, on the day of the Holy Trinity after dinner, whence the hue was raised. The same William blamed for including Hugh le duc within his tything, he denied, therefore let him make his law.

Walter Nele is made tithing-man, and says that the chest of Emma de Aqua (*i.e.*, Waters) was broken, and her goods were carried off in(to) the courtyard of Adam Doget; and makes mention of a coffer broken into, in the house of Duca de Aqua, and a bushel of wheat taken away; asked if they had any in suspicion they say no! Nothing more.

The relations between the Abbess and Convent and the Rector and brothers of Edyndon do not appear to have run smoothly. Towards the close of the incumbency of John de Aylesbury, in 1377, certain grievances were set out on the behalf of the Abbess and Convent, and are to be found amongst the Ecclesiastical documents of the Exchequer Q. R. The grievances are twenty-one in number. For instance, the Abbess and her predecessors had, time out of mind, the right of feed and pasture in Owaynesmede after the first mowing and carrying, namely, from the Feast of S. Peter ad Vincula to the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary (1st August—2nd February). But the Rector for three years had hindered this.

Again, the Rector and John Horton, a brother. had carried off Margery, daughter of William Blacche, native of the Lady. That is to say they no doubt claimed a right over one of the servile tenants of the Lady Abbess.

Again, the Rector and brothers had hunted in the free warren of the Abbess at Edyndon, and had taken and carried off hares and rabbits; also they had cut down and

carried off an elm, growing upon the waste ground of the Abbess at Tynhide, and had done the same with thorns, growing on the tenures of William Sampson, John Gay, William Blacche, and John Preest, native or servile tenants of the Abbey, at Northbroke. Further, the Rector's servants had grazed the pasture of the Lady at Landemereswey, Liteldrove to Viltham and Ridendiche. Also they held a gate towards the village of Tynhide, where from ancient time there never was a road, by which the Rector's swine wasted the corn and pasture of the Lady; they had cleaned out the ditch of the Rector's close next Inmede and cast the mud upon the Lady's meadow. They had given trouble, too, about cattle, rents, and other matters, and it is evident that the Abbey Steward,[1] William de Putton, and Thomas atte Forde, the bailiff, must have had an anxious time.

Edington and Ashton were not the only properties in which Romsey had an interest in this neighbourhood. The road from Westbury to Edington skirts along and beneath a chalk down or plateau which at the latter place rises 600 to 700 feet above sea level, and nearly 400 feet above the roadway, and looks over a broad vale towards Roundway Hill and the Marlborough Downs, with Devizes and Potterne in the middle distance. Just before reaching Edington, one of the celebrated white horses, cut out on the side of the down, is seen, and at Edington a step path leads to the top of the down. On the farther side of the village the down may be climbed by a road which passes up through a steep cutting, great nodular masses of chalk crowning the cliff above, on the western side. The road emerges on the down, a wide expanse of country partly cultivated, which extends for miles and is connected in an easterly direction with Salisbury Plain.

[1] William de Putton or Pytton held land at Stanbridge, in Romsey.—*Vide B.M. Add. Charters.*

IMBER CHURCH, WILTSHIRE.

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Soon after leaving a farmhouse just above Edington, the road ceases, and a traveller must proceed across the turf as best he may. About four miles from Edington, in a fold or depression of the down, he will come upon the ancient village of Imber :—

"Imber in the down,
Four miles from any town,"

according to a saying of the countryside. This is literally true, and the village is further cut off by an absence of roads ; on the opposite side to Edington a road runs for some distance out of the village but ends on the open down ; here, however, heaps of white chalk guide the traveller, and perhaps the native, in foggy weather, to Tilshead, or Tidulveshide, as it was anciently called.

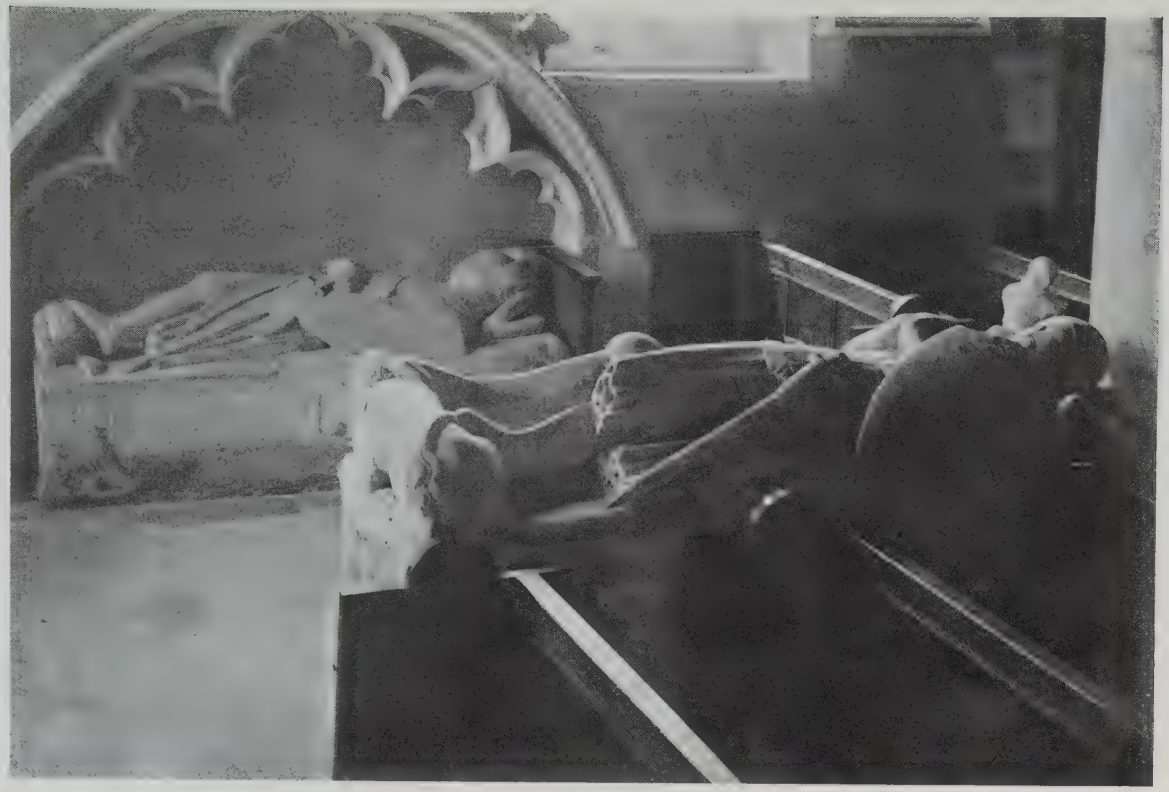
The name Immere (now Imber) seems to have been originally "Gemær," *i.e.*, junction, union, or boundary, the village being parcelled out between the two hundreds of Ruberg Regis and Heghtrebury (Heytesbury). This village was formerly divided into Imber North and Imber South ; the latter, comprising about two thirds of the parish, belonged to Romsey Abbey and the family of Le Rous, the former and lesser portion to the Le Rous family only. The Abbey held the advowson of the church, and presented the prebendary of S. Laurence to it, on each occasion. The Le Rous family appear to have presented to the living from about the year 1316, and perhaps earlier, though the Abbess claimed the right as against them in 1344. Mr. Hoare says : "The Abbess of Romsey frequently claimed the right of presentation to this chapel as part of the prebend of Timbresbury in that Abbey, but Le Rous generally succeeded as lord of the manor and founder."

A description of the church is given by Mr. C. E. Ponting, F.S.A., in the *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*. The church consists of a nave, with north and south aisles,

a chancel, and western tower ; the font is to be dated about the middle of the twelfth century, and belonged to the older Norman church. At the end of the thirteenth century the church was rebuilt, and in the fifteenth century, not later than 1420, the north and south aisles were rebuilt, and the north porch and tower were added, and the nave was re-roofed in waggon-headed form. "This fifteenth century work," says Mr. Ponting, "is bold and massive, and it must have been no slight task in those days to get up to Imber the large quoin and bonding stones. Owing to the peculiar treatment of the turret staircase the tower has five corners." It is thought that the knight in the recessed tomb may have been a benefactor at this time, but the style of the effigy points to an earlier date ; the arms on the shield belong to the Le Rous family.

This family may be traced back to a Richard, one of the King's Chamberlains, mentioned in 1167–8. To probably the same Richard, Henry II made grants, and in 1183 the Abbess, Juliana, gave a Charter relating to a farm. From this Richard the property, and his place in the King's camera, descended to another Richard, his nephew (nepos) son of Roger, and to Thomas, another nephew, both mentioned in 1202–3 ; and as Richard is mentioned in the Red book of the Exchequer in 1201–12, and Thomas son of Roger as holding by serjeanty in 1212–17, it is possible that this Thomas succeeded his brother Richard. A John appears in a deed, in the Edington Register, of 1241, and in the Testa de Nevill (the same or his son is found in the Patent Rolls, 1279–80), and a Matilda in the Hundred Rolls of 1275.

After this date the succession of the ancient family is fairly clear. Sir Thomas in the Parliamentary Writs of 1277 acknowledges that he owes the service of one "Serviens," armed with a haubergeon, an aketon, and a



EFFIGIES OF "LE ROUS." IMBER CHURCH.

To face p. 156.]

scull cap, and proffers himself by Walter Danesy on his behalf. This was for the expedition against Lewelin, Prince of Wales, and the muster was at Worcester on 1st July, and again at Carmarthen on 15th July. He makes the same proposal on 2nd August, 1282. He appears as a witness to a deed of Alice, Abbess of Romsey 1280–1, and is referred to as a Justice in the Close Roll of 1289, and in the next year occurs the entry that a Coroner is to be elected, he being incapacitated by weakness. He died shortly afterwards in 1290–1 and his son John succeeded.

The latter's name occurs for military service against the Scots in 1301, and he acknowledges and proffers the service of one serjeanty, performed by one "Serviens" with one unbarded horse, against the Scots in 1310; in the next year he is knight of the shire for Wilts, and obtains his writ for expenses for attendance in Parliament; in 1315 he obtains a writ of exoneration, having performed his service against the Scots; in 1316 he is certified as Lord of the Manor of Imber and of Leigh in Wilts; in 1320 he is appointed collector of scutage in the county, and two years later (1322) he is Commissioner of Array, being empowered to raise an additional number of troops; he is returned by the Sheriff as summoned, by general proclamation, to attend the great council at Westminster on Wednesday next after Ascension Day, 30th May, 1324. In 1313 he gave a release to the Abbey of his right to present two nuns to be veiled there with a valet [servant] to be maintained there. He presented John de Immere, probably a relative, to Imber in 1325, and made several presentations to the same place in 1325 and 1326. He died 1329–31.

A case was brought into Court at Easter, 1332, by Ric. de Walop against Ela, widow of this John le Rous, as to one acre at Couveleston. Ela, by her attorney, says she

holds the land as dower from John, once her husband, with reversion to John, son of John le Rous, of Inmere. On 26th October, 1340, a pardon was granted to Thomas de Langford and Ela, late the wife of John le Rous, tenant-in-chief, for intermarriage without license; they were fined five marks.

Sir John succeeded his father, and presents Richard le Rous to the chapel of Imber in 1339. On 19th October, 1330, a royal license was given for John le Rous of Inmere to enfeoff Will. de Hedyngdon (Edyngdon), clerk, of the manor of Inmere, co. Wilts, and for him to regrant the same to the said John, and Alice, his wife, in tail male, with remainder to the right heir of John. On 16th January, 1331, protection was granted to him, with others, beyond the seas in the King's service. In 1332 Will. de Edyndon is called upon to reply to the plea of John le Rous, of Inmere, and Alice his wife, concerning the manor of Inmere. John seems to have died before 28th May, 1341, when a license was given for Alice, late the wife of John le Rous, to grant for her life to Adam, Bishop of Winchester, the manor of Inmere, said to be held in chief; two years later, 6th January, 1343, a license was issued for Adam, Bishop of Winchester, to demise to Alice, late the wife of John le Rous, the estate for her life in the manor of Inmere, lately acquired from her by the Bishop with the King's license. John and Alice had a son, named Philip, alive in 1345, but he evidently died, as he did not succeed to the property. Alice presented to Imber chapel in 1344 and 1346, and it was in her time that the Abbess made a claim to present. She died 1360.

On 30th August, 1345, Richard is mentioned as executor of his brother John's will. This Richard made a feoffment of right in the manor of Imber, 1355–6, but still held it by serjeanty as Camerarius Regis, 1361–3, and granted a

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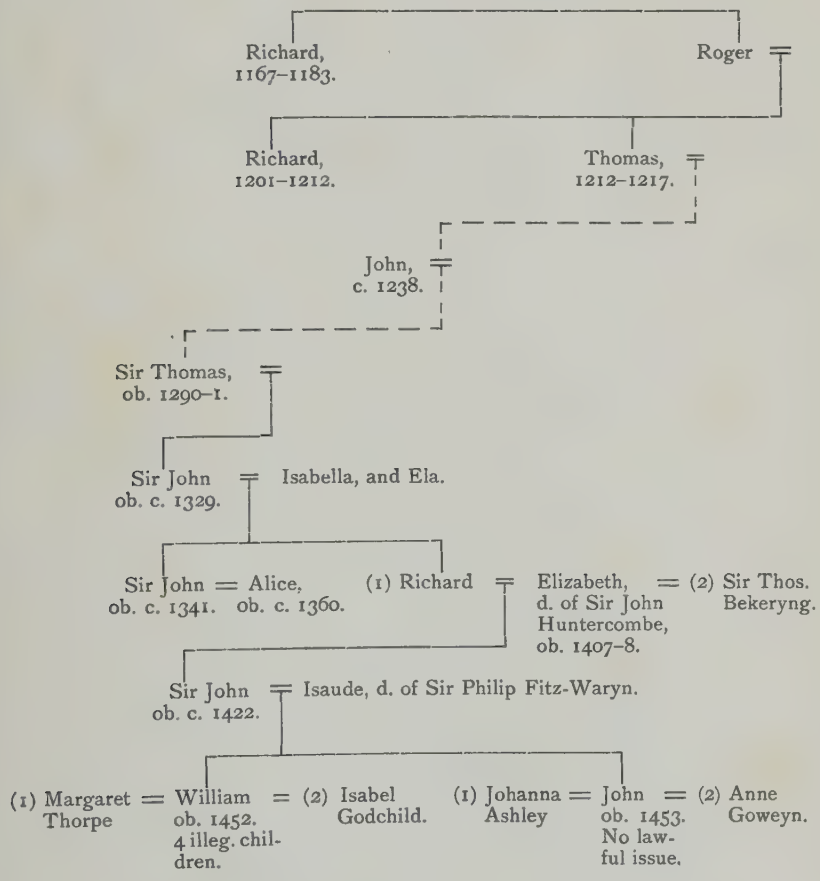
THE FAMILY OF LE ROUS OF YMMERE.



reversion of Imber to Edington Priory. He presented to Imber in 1361, and there are various grants in connection with Edington Priory, founded about this time. His wife Elizabeth was one of the three daughters of Sir J. Huntercombe, and married for her second husband Sir Th. Bekerying, Kt., who presented to Imber 1394. She died 1407–8.

The son, Sir John, called senior, married Isaude, the daughter of Sir Philip Fitz-Waryn and Constance, his wife. Two sons were born to Sir John and Isaude; the elder, William, who left no legitimate issue, and gradually parted with the property, died 31st August, 1452, and was buried at the Grey Friars, London; the younger, John, who is called lord of Baynton, died in 1453 without lawful issue; he was buried at Edington by the side of his first wife, Johanna Ashley, in the south aisle of the choir. His anniversary was kept there, the manor of Baynton being held by the Rector for that purpose. The story is that he had been a great supporter of the Lollards, and that he made his peace with the Church by the grant of Baynton manor to Edington Monastery in the year 1443.

This cursory account of the family of le Rous must appear somewhat dry and uninteresting, but no description of the little village, so closely connected with Romsey Abbey, would be complete without a reference to the ancient lords of the manor. The present manor-house, standing perhaps on the site of a more ancient one, nestles under the great down at the head of the village. The single street is bounded on one side by a stream fed from springs which burst forth from the chalk, but as these are intermittent the inhabitants are often deprived of their stream which becomes a dry and empty watercourse. No account of Romsey Abbey could be given without a reference to

Imber, but the village itself is not without interest by reason of its history and seclusion ; it is a place apart, and lives a life even in this twentieth century cut off from the outer world.

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CHAPTER X.

A.D. 1352—1405.

ABBESS ISABELLA DE CAMOYS.

"The nuns shall not be prevailed upon to take upon themselves the office of godmother."

Bp. William of Wykeham's Injunctions.

Chapter X.

ABBESS ISABELLA DE CAMOYS.

ISABEL DE CAMOYS was appointed Abbess on the 25th November, 1352, with the usual formalities. Some of the official documents are to be found in Bishop Edyndon's Register, but no account of the proceedings in the Church and Chapter House at Romsey is enrolled, and therefore no list of the sisters has survived. Such a list, so soon after the Great Pestilence, would have been of much interest, because it would have shown how far the pestilence had affected the numbers in the Convent, and would have preserved the names of those sisters who had survived this terrible ordeal.

To this Abbess fell the task of completing the business, begun by her predecessor, with Bishop Edyndon in the matter of the Edington Priory. To her the Bishop left a ring, set with one ruby, together with £20 in money, for prayers for his soul. He added another £20 for distribution amongst the sisters, that they might perform the like charitable office for him. To the Rector of the new Priory of Edington, John de Aylesbury, the same Bishop left a like sum and a silver cup with a cover. It is of interest to notice, by way of contrast, that while he left a like sum of £20 to St. Swithun's, the great Winchester monastery, he only gave to Hyde, the Nunnaminster, and Wherwell twenty marks each, or £6. 13*s*. 4*d*. The will

was proved on the 20th of October, 1366, and in it the Bishop's father and mother are named, Roger and Amice.

Isabella de Camoys continued Abbess for forty-four years (1352–1396), a length of time exceeded by no other abbess, with the exception of Maud Lovell, one of her successors in the fifteenth century. Abbess Isabella was a member of a Sussex family of importance, her father being Ralph de Camoys, Governor of Windsor, and her mother Joan daughter of Hugh le Despenser, Earl of Winchester. The family of de Camoys owned manors at Trotton and Broadwater; the former place lies near Selborne and Bramshott, just beyond the Hampshire border, and the church contains some very fine brasses to members of this family.

Two years before Bishop Edyndon's death, a small number of nuns had been professed by Robert Wyville, Bishop of Salisbury, at the Bishop of Winchester's request; this was in the winter of 1362. The names of these ladies were:—Johanna Borhunte, Sibilla Holte, Isabella de Certeseye, and Thomasina Blount. The last named was sister to Lady Alice West, daughter of Reginald Fitz-Piers, Baron of Wolverley in Worcestershire, and wife of Sir Thomas West, who held land in Romsey. On her death, Lady Alice left various bequests to relatives and others, and amongst them she left to her sister, Dame Lucy Fitz-Herbert, Prioress of Shaftesbury, the sum of £40; to her sister Thomasina Blount, a nun at Romesey, 40 marks; and 100 shillings to the religious houses of Shaftesbury, Romsey, and Wilton. These are the words relating to Romsey:—"Also I bequethe to the Religiouse women the Menchouns of the Hows of Romeseye and to the Prestes longynge to the same Hows C.s." The will is dated at Hinton Martel, a village in Dorsetshire, the 15th of July, 1395, so that Thomasina Blount must have been an inmate of the Convent for over thirty-three years at the least.

Bishop Edyndon seems to have been very watchful in preventing the crowding of convents with a larger number of nuns than the revenues would bear. At the beginning of his episcopate in 1346, he wrote to St. Mary's, Winchester, to Romsey and Wherwell "forbidding them to take a greater number of nuns than anciently accustomed or than can be sustained by them without penury, also forbidding them to sell or give corrodies when the ancient ones are vacant, or to admit any secular persons, except necessary servants, to live within the boundaries of the Monastery, without the Bishop's special license, and ordering them to remove all secular persons within the Monastery within a month from the receipt of the letter, and to let him know the number of nuns and how they have carried out his injunctions, before the Feast of St. Nicholas next, *i.e.*, the 6th December." In 1363 he wrote in a similar strain, and very probably other letters had been sent in between, for in the latter year he complains that having heard, by public report, that they have not obeyed his former letter, he orders them to remove all women lodging there (perhendinatrices), whom they have received contrary to his letters, within fifteen days, and to receive no others without his special license.

His successor, Bishop William of Wykeham, however, on 29th May, 1372, gave a special recommendation to receive a lady as a guest. The Bishop desires them, at the request of William Earl of Pembroke, to receive his kinswoman, Dame Elizabeth de Berkele, during her husband's absence on military service. The Earl was sent to relieve Rochelle, but his ships were taken and burnt by a Spanish fleet on midsummer eve, and he was made prisoner. The lady's husband is named Maurice Wyth. That the introduction of lodgers into a convent might prove unfavourable to the peace and quiet of the sisters

may be gathered from an event which occurred in the winter of 1375. Certain persons broke into the houses of the Abbess within the Abbey and carried off Joan, late the wife of Peter Brugge, and her property, consisting of her gold rings, gold brooches or bracelets with precious stones, linen and woollen clothes and furs; her chaplin, John Stonly, aiding and abetting the felony.

On Sunday, the 19th of September, 1400, the Suffragan Bishop, Henry of Annadown, received the following ladies as nuns:—Margery Camoys, Alice Warennere, Joan Stratford, Alice Northlode, Alice Forester, Elizabeth Sampson, Maud Lovell, Katherine de la Mare, Alice Chamberlyn, Isabel Lekforde, Alice Artone, Juliana Shirnham, and Joan Umfray. Margery Camoys was a daughter of Sir Hugh Camoys, and must have been a kinswoman of the Abbess Isabella, who died in 1396. Alice Forester was, it is likely, a daughter of John and Elizabeth Forester, who held land at Goycroft and Wells in Romsey under the Abbey. John had died some five years previously, and Bishop Henry, perhaps the Suffragan, was commissioned on 4th September, 1400, to receive the vow of Elizabeth, relict of John Forester, of Romsey, and deliver to her the veil and ring of chastity.

Fosbroke, in his *British Monachism*, says of these vows of mourning widows that they were very ancient: "The Anglo-Saxon widows made them, and the women wore a ring and russett gown. The Bishop of the diocese issued a commission, and besides observing the vow, the widow was for life to wear a veil and a mourning habit. Both were duly consecrated; the veil was put on by the priest, but the ring only was sufficient." An example of the fourteenth century describes how the Bishop of Ely himself, after celebrating Mass, received a lady's vow of chastity and solemnly consecrated and put upon the said vowess the mantle and ring.

Maud Lovell afterwards became Abbess, and did not die till 1462. The Leckfords, of Leckford, had dealings with the Abbey from early days, and about this time Thomas Leckford held property under the Abbess. Joan Umfray was no doubt a kinswoman of John Umfray, appointed vicar of S. Laurence in 1400. That thirteen nuns should have been received at once seems to indicate either a number of deaths or an improvement in the financial state of the Convent. It can hardly indicate a lack of candidates in previous years, in the face of Bishop Edyndon's letters, quoted above.

"The profession of nuns," says Mr. Fosbroke, "could be done by an Abbott or Visitor of the House after the year of probation and change of habit, and could be applied to any woman, whether virgin or not. Nuns were usually professed at the age of sixteen years." The entries relating to Romsey, which have been quoted from the Episcopal Registers, seem to refer to *profession*. There was another and a very elaborate service for the *consecration* of a nun, which could only be performed by the Bishop, and could not take place until the sister was twenty-five years old. It was inapplicable to widows, and was reserved for virgin nuns only.

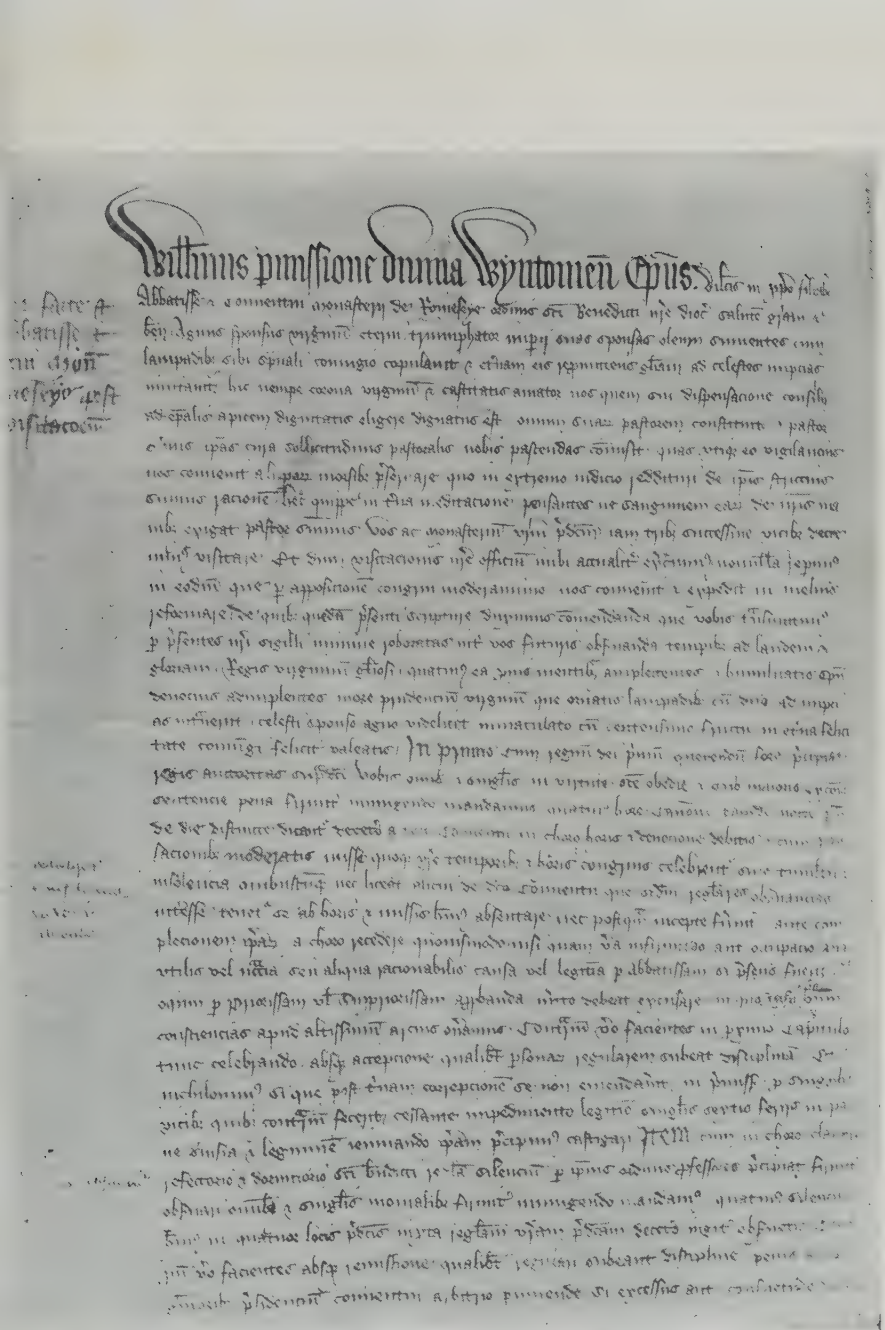
"The virgin, after the beginning of Mass and before the reading of the Epistle, came before the altar, robed in white, carrying the religious habit in her right hand and an extinguished taper in her left. The habit she laid before the altar, at the Bishop's feet, and held the taper in her hand. The Bishop then consecrated the habit and gave it to her, the veil excepted, saying: 'Take, girl, the robe, which you shall wear in innocence,' upon which she went into the re-vestry, put it on, and returned with a lighted taper in her hand, singing: 'I love Christ . . . . .' Then, after the Epistle, Gospel and Creed, the Bishop

said: 'Come! come! come! daughters, I will teach you the fear of the Lord,' upon which the nun came before the altar singing:—'And now we follow with our whole hearts.' A Litany was then said by the clerks and seven Psalms by the Bishop, after which the Bishop arose and began the *Veni Creator*; then the nun arose and came before the altar, when the Bishop put the veil on her head as she stooped. She then made her profession, placed a cross on the altar, and said three times: 'Receive me, O Lord,' after which she lay prostrate before the altar whilst certain Psalms were sung, etc." For a full and complete account of the service, reference must be made to Mr. Fosbroke's *British Monachism;* the extract here made will suffice to give some idea of the nature of the ceremony.

There are two strange cases of the excommunication of nuns in the middle of the century. The first case is that of Margaret Poyns, who had laid violent hands upon the vicar, and, what was worse, she had committed the assault within the church. No reason is given for this extraordinary act on the nun's part, nor is there any means of knowing how far the vicar may have been to blame, but the sister is censured in no measured terms in the document by which the Bishop gives to two clergy commission to absolve her.

This vicar was Nicholas de Boteleston,* *i.e.*, of Botulph's town, or Boston, Lincolnshire. He had been vicar for some twelve years at the time (1347), having been appointed in 1334. He died soon after in the Great Pestilence. The derivation of his name is made practically certain by an entry in the Patent Rolls under 24th of June, 1347:—"Nicholas, Vicar of Romsey, acknowledges that he owes to Master J. de Offord, Dean of St. Mary's Church, Lincoln,

* His seal is given on another page.



INJUNCTIONS OF BISHOP WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.
(From Register at New College, Oxford.)

To face p. 168.]

[See p. 172.

£100, to be levied, in default of payment, of his lands and chattels and ecclesiastical goods in Co. Southampton."

The other case is that of Margery de Rye. On the 20th of March, 1368, the Bishop appointed John Turke, the Rector of Michelmersh, to hear the confession of Margery, or Marion de Rye. He authorised him to absolve her from the crime of apostacy if she is guilty. He had already on the 8th of February written to the Abbess saying that "he is informed that this nun has doffed the veil, and sits not in the choir with the nuns but in the nave with other women, and frequents private rooms, concerting and gossiping there with secular persons contrary to the decorum of her profession and the orders of the Abbess, neither worshipping in the choir nor saying the hours." The Abbess is enjoined to admonish her to resume the veil and conform to rule. In the September following, the Bishop again writes, saying: "He hears that Marion is disobedient. The Abbess may compel her to conform by any discipline not endangering life, using her own discretion in so doing."

Another vicar was the occasion of trouble in the Convent, and this time the priest was clearly in the wrong. The trouble arose over the blessing of the palms for Palm Sunday, as may be seen by an extract from Bishop William of Wykeham's Register:—"It hath been the usage from the time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, that the Sacrist of the Abbey Church shall bless the palms and boughs of other trees used at Mass on Palm Sunday, and that from the High Altar and not elsewhere. Yet so it is, that the Vicar, John Folyot, John Mascal, and John . . . . . , chaplains, have interfered with the Sacrist in the exercise of this privilege. Wherefore the Dean of Somborn is ordered to inhibit the vicar and chaplains, pending a decision of a cause promoted

by the Abbess and Convent against them. Dated the 13th March, 1372."

During the latter part of the fourteenth century the Abbey received certain advantages. King Richard the Second, after the inspection of the Convent's charters, given by his predecessors, confirmed them on the 10th of May, 1390. The Abbey's copy is in the possession of the Right Honourable Evelyn Ashley, of Broadlands; it is the only document, of the many that were once stored in the Convent treasury, which has survived the general destruction and remained in the neighbourhood. A fresh confirmation was issued by Henry the Fourth on 20th of February, 1401, and again by Edward the Fourth on 1st of July, 1462.

Gifts were made to the Abbess and Convent in 1360 by Walter Nott, parson of the Church of Muchelmersh and John Peuseys, chaplain, and John Wodefeld. The first two donors gave a messuage, an acre of land and a perch and 4*s.* rent, and also 6*s.* rent issuing from a messuage held by one John and Isabel Ablyngton, as long as they live. The last two donors give a messuage, and this property was in Romseye parish. Walter Nott adds sixteen acres of land and 3*s.* rent in Romseye and Sydmanton. These premises were held of the Abbey in socage by service of 12*s.* yearly.

A similar gift followed in 1367, when Martin Moulysh, clerk, Richard Pauncefot, William de Putton, Joan widow of Gregory de Hoghton, John Menstede the Vicar of Romsey, and John le Forester made donations to the Abbey. The various properties consisted of messuages in Romsey, eleven in number, and six shops; the gift of Widow Joan is charged to Walter de Sevenhampton the Prebendary, in 3*s.* 6*d.* a year, and a part of the land was in Stanbridge. The gift of the Vicar and John le Forester

was a large one, besides three messuages and six shops, they gave two ploughlands, fifteen acres of land, eighty-four acres of meadow, sixty-four acres of wood, £1. 11*s.* 9½*d.* rent, and these lay in Romeseye, Rugge or Ridge, Totton, Terstwode, Magna More, Parva More, and Forde by Eure, now Oure. This gift, however, only came to the Abbey at the death of William and John Malewayn, to whom they were first given. Richard Pauncefot, one of the donors, was a member of the family who all through the Middle Ages held the Manor of Mayneston on the farther side of Middlebridge, together with the farm up the hill which still bears their name. William de Putton was seneschal, or steward, of the Abbey, and held land at Stanbridge. The Malewayns were of Testwode, and their name survived as a place name at the Suppression of the Abbey, when in the account roll of the King's bailiff mention is made of Moore Court and Moore Malwayn. John Menstede was appointed vicar at the time of the Great Pestilence, his immediate predecessor, William de Bures, having only survived for a few months; his successor, John Folyot who was made famous or infamous over the dispute about "blessing the palms," was appointed between the date of this gift in 1367 and the dispute in 1372. Another vicar, Roger Purye, appointed in 1380, received a share in a benefit conferred on the parsons of Asshe, Romsey, Fakcombe, and Somborne by Walter Skylling. The latter had in 1364 obtained a grant from John Lord Talmache in respect of a property in Up Somborne, and he gave, at the later date, £40 annual rent, charged on the manor there, to John Peusey of Asshe, Roger Purye of Romsey, Thomas Thorold of Fakcombe, and John Cole of Somborne.

Lucy Everard succeeded Isabel de Camoys as Abbess, the proceedings took about a month, beginning the 17th of April and ending 16th May, 1396. Before the close of

the year Bishop William of Wykeham issued a commission to Nicholas Wykeham, Archdeacon of Wiltshire, and John Elmere, his official, to visit the Abbey the 8th of September, 1396. This was done, and the Injunctions which followed the Visitation are to be found, not as usual in the Bishop's Registers, but in a small folio preserved at New College, Oxford. These Injunctions are said to be especially interesting. Amongst other matters, the sisters are strictly charged not to be prevailed upon to take upon themselves the office of godmother, it entailing various inconvenient results. The opening page of these Injunctions will be found on another page. The details cannot be given, as the MS. is not at the present time available. Abbess Lucy Everard, like several of her predecessors, seems to have become infirm, for the Bishop on 21st August, 1402, gave her permission to hear Divine service in her oratory, for one year, one of the sisters and her servants to be present. She died soon afterwards, and it was not long before the Bishop himself departed this life, nor, with the exception of one important matter to be related in the next chapter, is there any further information about Romsey during this great Prelate's episcopate.

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CHAPTER XI.

A.D. 1340—1540.

THE PARISH CHURCH AND TOWN.

The Parish Church has been and is much too little fitted for such a place and for so large a population."

Register of Bishop William of Wykeham.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PARISH CHURCH AND TOWN.

DURING the fifteenth century, and even earlier, the towns which were under ecclesiastical Lords, the Bishops, Abbotts, and Priors, engaged in a continual struggle to gain a greater independence. Many succeeded in winning certain liberties and rights, and the system of town government by the town gradually came into being. Nothing of the sort appears to have taken place in the case of Romsey; indeed the town was too small to have had much independent existence apart from the great Abbey which overshadowed it.

An idea of the size of the town in the middle of the fourteenth century may be gained from a list of inhabitants who paid the tax of a fifteenth in 1340 to the Royal Treasury. The town was divided then as now into two parts, Romsey Infra and Romsey Extra, or Romsey within and Romsey without the bridge, the dividing line being the Fishlet or Fishlake stream. This stream was crossed by Porter's Bridge in the neighbourhood of the present Berthon Boat Works, by the Hundred Bridge on the eastern side of the Market Place, and by the Broad Bridge by Broadwater at the entrance to Banning Street. The stream then as now continued its course down Middlebridge Street. This part of the town indicated by Romsey Infra would be the streets which lay immediately around the

Church, viz. Church or Church-style Street, Cherville (perhaps Church-ville) Street, Porter's or the Porte Bridge Street, the Market Place, and the west side of Middle or Myll Bridge Street. Romsey Extra would mean the hundred and its continuation, known in former times as Spitel Street, now the Winchester Road, Lullane, now Love Lane, Lortemere, now Latimer Street, Bannok, now Banning Street, Brodelond Style, and possibly the country district around.

The list for 1340 gives fifty-six families for Romsey Infra and sixteen for Romsey Extra. If an average of five members is allowed to a family, the total for the Infra district would be 280, and for the Extra 80, giving a combined total of 360 inhabitants. There must have been many families who paid no tax, besides household servants, but if the number given above be trebled it will only give a population of about 1000 persons for the town, apart from the inhabitants of the Abbey. Even if the town were somewhat larger than this it would not have been of sufficient size, nor its inhabitants of sufficient weight, to have sought any very serious independence of the courts and officers of the great Abbey.

The highest tax paid by any individual was 6*s.*, and the lowest 12*d.*; the total for the Infra part was £6. 13*s.*, and for the Extra part 40*s.* 4*d.*, making the whole tax of a fifteenth paid by Romsey £8. 13*s.* 4*d.* There is no certain method of comparing the value of money then and now; it has been suggested that the pay of a chaplain or chantry priest may be compared with that of a modern curate, both representing a "living wage," and so giving a standard of comparison. From 1130 down to at least 1234–5 the pay of the chaplain in Windsor Castle was 30*s.* 5*d.* per annum, or 1*d.* per day. From as early as 1239–40 it rose to 50*s.*, and so continued to quite as late as

1315. The next year one of the chaplains was to be paid ten marks or £6. 13*s.* 4*d.*, three others 100*s.* or £5, and others 50*s.* In 1317–18 all four chaplains were paid £6. 13*s.* 4*d.* This latter sum, if multiplied by 22, gives nearly £150 per annum. Mr. Charles Wall, in his recently published book *Shrines of British Saints*, says that moneys of the thirteenth century, multiplied by 24, will approximately give the relative value. For moneys of circa 1400 the same writer multiplies by 16. The date of the Romsey tax falling between these two dates, 20 may be used for the multiplier. If this is a correct way of representing moneys of the fourteenth century in present day values, the men of Romsey were assessed on a sum of £2600, and paid for a tax of a fifteenth £173. 6*s.* 8*d.* The highest individual assessment was on a sum of £90, and the lowest on £15; the highest tax paid was £6, and the lowest £1; but these sums of £90 and £15 must not be supposed to represent the incomes of individual tax-payers. It is to be regretted that there is no means of arriving at a certain knowledge of the worldly wealth of the Romsey folk at this date, which would have been a matter of some interest.

But whilst the men of the town were no doubt the Abbey's men, there are indications that the town had some little individuality of its own. An interesting letter addressed to the King, concerning the tax in 1338, is signed by four individuals, and their seals are attached on behalf of their fellow-townsmen. These men were William de Codewell, Thomas de Bourne, John le Bacch, and Andrew Parlebien. The first two occur again in the list of taxpayers in 1340. William paid the highest tax of 6*s.*, whilst Thomas paid 3*s.* These men may be supposed to have been chosen for the purpose of representing the town and to have been responsible for the payment of the tax.

This letter is in French, and the substance of it is worth copying. The list of taxpayers of 1340 is also printed.

LETTER OF THE MEN OF ROMESYE TO THE KING.

To the most excellent and noble lord, Lord Edward by the grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, his liege men of the town of Romesye commend themselves to him in whatever services, reverence and honours they can. We certify to your high Lordship that we have received your letters of trust sent to us by your clerk Alayn de Boys, on which trust we were charged that we ought to send to you all the money which it pertains to us to pay for the fifteenth of our goods for the two years next to come, for great affairs touching you and your passage; and, on account of various charges and grievances of debts of our wool, corn, malt, beasts, waggons and our victuals to great costs, for the guard on the sea, we cannot fully perform the abovesaid payment, but we will send to Ipswich 8*l.* and 4*d.*, which is the fifteenth of one year, so that the said money shall be there on Sunday next after the feast of the translation of Saint Thomas (7th July); of the remainder of which, we pray respite until the time of payment which is lately granted, for certain, in Parliament. In witness of performance of the payment of the said 8*l.* and 4*d.* at the day and place abovesaid, William de Codewell, Thomas de Bourne, John le Bacch and Andrew Parlebien, four men of the said town of Romesie have put their seals to these letters. Given at Romesie the last day of June, the twelfth year of your reign (A.D. 1338).

SUBSIDY ROLL.

Co. Southampton. First payment of subsidy granted 14 Edward III (A.D. 1340):—

Taxacio xvth ville de Romeseye infra Pontem.

Witto Sewy	iijs.	Walto Langeforde	xijd.
Simone Molendinar̃	iijs.	Robto Pottar	xijd
Witto Stermer	iijs.	Rico Edemond	xijd.
Witto Codeuelle	vjs.	Henr̃ Stur	ijs.

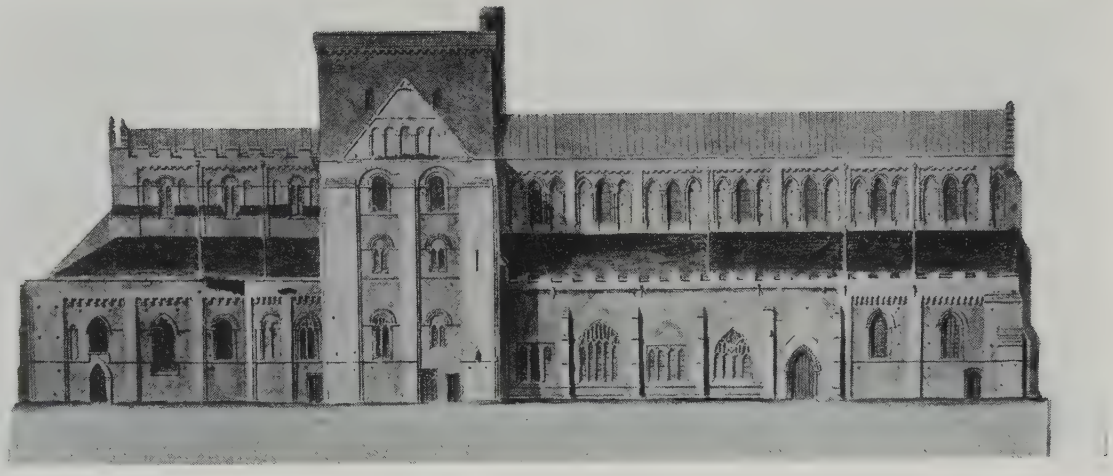
Joħe Estemeste	xijd.	Phĩpo le Thrustell	xviijd.
Thom̃ de Bourñ	iijs.	Juliana Goldefynch	ijs.
Henr̃ Goury	iijs.	Roƀto Soylde	ijd.
Joħe le Boghyer	iijs.	Ad Iowys	vjs.
Jacobo Poun	vs.	Edm̃o Irmongeŕ	iijs.
Joħe Hounde	xijd.	Joħe Pach	iiijs.
Joħe Dounebrug	xviijd.	Stepħo Carnifex	xijd.
Rog̃o Frost	iiis.	Joħe Kyry	iijs.
Wiłło Poun	ijs.	Margar̃ Uppehull	iiijs.
Agneť Gobet	iijs.	Joħe Goury	xviijd.
Christina Poun	vs.	Walt̃o Leche	xijd.
Johanna Scharprust	ijs.	Roƀto Marays	iijs.
Nicħo Freyr̃	xviijd.	Thom̃ Burgeys	xiid.
Roƀto Vrleby	iijs.	Joħe Burgeys	xijd.
Ricĕo Taillour	xijd.	Jacobo Hayward	vjs.
Henr̃ Mourtone	xviijd.	Henr̃ Frend	iiis.
Joħe Barbour	xijd.	Joħe Rayour	xijd.
Joħe Lyme	xijd.	Joħe Pullebrig	iijs.
Ricĕo atte Wythe	xviijd.	Wiłło Gille	vjs.
Walt̃o Taillour	xijd.	Ad atte Burgg	vjs.
Thom̃ Fraunkeleyn	xijd.	Joħe de Shaftesbury	xijd.
Wiłło atte Pile	xijd.	Joħe Solrugg	xijd.
Wiłło Wattedene	ijs.	Marco Tamar̃	xijd.
Wiłło Gatte	iijs.	Ricĕo Maynard	iijs.
	Total	vjli. xiijs.	

Taxacia xv^th^ ville de Romesey extra Pontem.

Joħe Webbe	vjs.	Thom̃ Shephird	ijs. xd.
Joħe atte Felde	vs.	Joħe Gyffard	xijd.
Ad le Cokť	xijd.	Joħe Laittť	xviijd.
Isold atte Corneŕ	xijd.	Marg̃ia Webbe	xijd.
Henr̃ Stour	iiijs.	Thom̃ Gunry	xijd.
Wiłło Tolfry	vs.	Ricĕo Snayl	ijs.
Wiłło Melemāg̃	ijs.	Wiłło Baker	xijd.
Joħe Glutť	vs.	Joħe Baker	xijd.
	Total	xls. iiijd.	

Nine years later came the Great Pestilence, and the town no doubt suffered no less than the Abbey, but a recovery is indicated at the close of the century by a significant entry in the Episcopal Register of Bishop William of Wykeham. The Bishop had made an enquiry in 1372 as to who was liable for the repairs of the north aisle of the Minster. Now the north aisle had been for years, and was probably always, the parish church of S. Laurence, separated by screens from the nave of the Minster, and reserved for the use of the townsfolk. This aisle was in an unsatisfactory condition; the poverty ensuing on the Great Pestilence may well have been the cause of neglected repairs and consequent decay. The Bishop, who is celebrated for his zeal in building and for his love of architecture, was the very man to make his influence felt about even so small a church. The repairs taken in hand at the time cannot now be enumerated, but the matter did not rest with repairs, for on 10th May, 1403, on the application of the Vicar, John Umfray, and the parishioners, a faculty was granted to pull down the north aisle, from the transept to the porch, and to rebuild it on a larger scale. The Bishop, when issuing his license, speaks of the church as too confined and mean to hold the parishioners when they come together on the Lord's day, or on Festivals, to hear divine service. He commends their desire to make their church larger and more beautiful, and points to the Jews as an example for the adornment of Christian churches. If they for the sacrifice of dead creatures adorned their temples, how much more should Christians, with deep affection and ardent zeal, care for the beauty of the house in which the true and living sacrifice is offered upon the altar.

The Bishop then speaks of the number of the parishioners, of either sex, belonging to the church, observing



[J. Buckler, 1806.

NORTH SIDE OF ROMSEY ABBEY.

Showing Nave Aisle or Parish Church of S. Laurence.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 180.]

[See p. 181.

that it is the only church in the town, and that the town is likely to become notable, and concludes by declaring that the church has been and is too little fitted for such a place, and for so large a population.

On the issue of the license, the work of pulling down or rather of piercing the north wall, was proceeded with, and a new wall was built further north in a line with the north wall of the transept, enclosing by this means a large additional space, the width of the transept. The new building became the nave of the new parish church, the old church becoming the aisle of the new one. The west wall of the transept was pierced, and the latter became the chancel of the enlarged church, separated off from the Minster by a carved oak screen, the cresting of which still survives and occupies a place on the top of the modern screen in the Abbey Church. The late Vicar, the Rev. E. L. Berthon, describes how he found "far away under one of the old roofs, these ancient oak carvings of heads in trefoils, with a curious cresting above." The history of the screen anterior to this is to be found in a *Historical and Descriptive Companion to Romsey Abbey of the year 1828.* "There is," it says, "a curious oaken screen of neat Gothic workmanship, which now separates the west end from the part which is fitted up for worship. It formerly stood in the northern transept, and separated it from the body of the church, but when the alteration in the pewing was made it was removed to the place it now occupies, immediately under the organ; it was then painted. The top of the screen is crowned with running foliage, underneath which, in twenty-three Gothic trefoils, are as many carved faces. They are evidently portraits, very tolerably executed, and on this account curious and interesting. One of them is crowned, and all of them have their heads covered either with flowing hair, or wigs, or caps. The last on the right

hand is a head thrusting out its tongue—perhaps a sportive essay of the carver."

Besides granting a faculty, the Bishop wrote a letter to the Abbess begging her to encourage and assist the vicar in this considerable undertaking. So extensive an enlargement, and one that must have been costly, points to a no inconsiderable increase in the population of the town, and to a desire for a more dignified church with ampler accommodation. This desire exhibits a growing feeling, on the part of the town, of its individual importance.

The interest in the parish church was maintained, a slight indication of which is found in the will of Thomas Shotter, 1464–67. After expressing his desire to be buried in the parish church of S. Laurence de Romsey, he bequeaths for *the fabric of the new aisle*, 6*s.* 8*d.*, for repairing the books a like sum, for a light, 6*d.*, and to the vicar, 6*s.* 8*d.* Another bequest is of much interest: he leaves to the Brotherhood of S. George 20*s.* The exact date of the institution of this Brotherhood is not at present ascertained, but a chantry for it was founded on the 17th February, 1475, when King Edward IV granted letters patent for this object.

"We have granted and given a license," so runs the letter, "to our beloved cousin William, Earl of Arundel, William Berkeley, Esquire, Edward Berkeley, Esquire, and Robert Berell, also to John Baker, Robert Blake, John Holme, and John Bacon, wardens of the church of S. Laurence of Romsey, that they, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, or one of them, may, to the glory of God and the increase of divine worship, and of S. George the Martyr, found, ... a certain perpetual chantry for one chaplain for ever, to celebrate mass every day in the parish church, ... for our good estate and that of our well-beloved consort Elizabeth, Queen of England, and Edward,

our eldest son, while we live, and for our souls when we shall have departed from this world, ... and for the founders above-mentioned; the chaplain is permitted to receive property to the value of £8."

The existence of this Brotherhood and the foundation of this chantry indicates a growing sense of distinct corporate life on the part of the town and parishioners. By or before the last quarter of the century this feeling would seem to have been further quickened, for on the 11th of June, 1485, eight men gave twelve messuages, twelve gardens, ten acres of land and four acres of meadow in Rommesey to this chaplain. The premises were worth 66*s.* 8*d.*, and were given in part satisfaction of the £8 worth of land which the late King had granted license to the said chaplain to purchase. The donors were Simon Crowchman, Stephen Cooke, William Tornour, John Eseby, Robert Whityng, Stephen Hayward, John Emery, and Richard Moore. One property lay in Bromcroft in Mayenston within the town, and was held of Walter Paunsfote Knight.

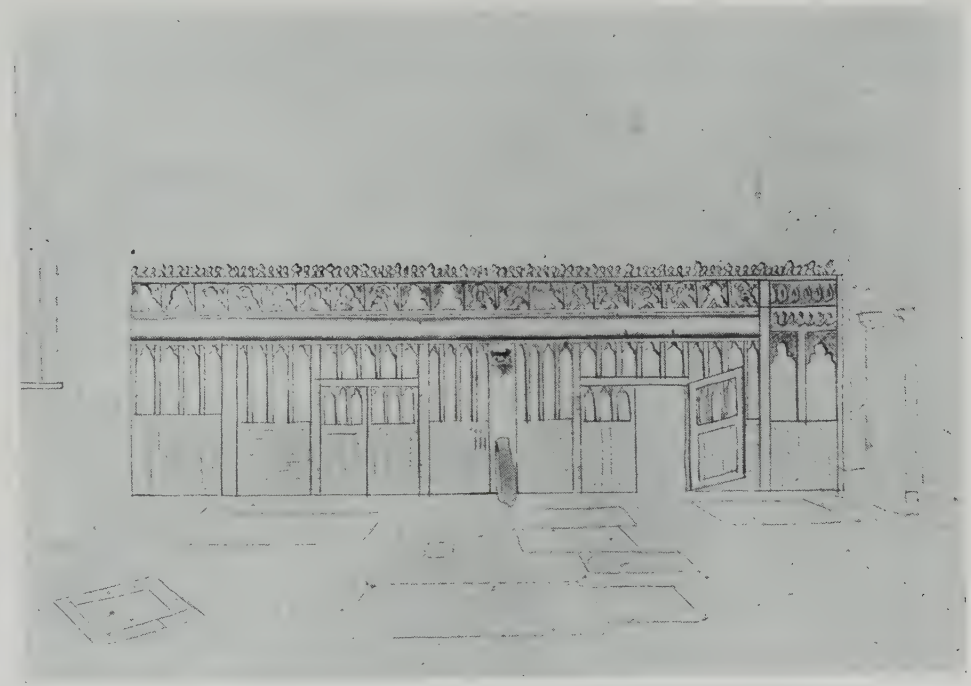
From about this time the wills of parishioners help to throw light upon the parish church and its customs. *William Molens*, a dyer, dates his will 18th August, 1494; it was proved on 10th January following. The beginning may be quoted at length:—

"I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, our Lady Saint Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven, and my body to be buried before the image of Saint Katerin in the north aisle of the parish church of S. Laurence in Romsey, if it please God that I should decease there. *Also* I bequeath to the altar of S. Laurence and to the vicar of the same for my tithes forgotten, 6*s.* 8*d.*, to pray for my soul. *Also* I bequeath to the fraternity of S. George in Romsey 3*s.* 4*d.* *Item.*—To maintain the light before the image of S. Katherin, 1 lb. of wax yearly during the

term of seven years. *Item.*—To the church works, 6*s.* 8*d.* *Item.*—To the mother church of S. Swythin in Winchester, 20*d.* *Also* I will that a priest sing S. Gregoris trentall for my soul the year immediately after my departing following, out of this life. *Item.*—I will that there be dispersed among poor people in alms by the month's day, 26*s.* 8*d.* *Item.*—I will that my year's mind be kept yearly, while there be sufficient goods of mine to maintain it."

In almost every will made at the beginning of the sixteenth century a bequest is made to the Brotherhood of S. George. Robert Martyn (6th May, 1502) gives 20*d.* or about £1 in present day money; John Gate (15th May, 1502) gives 2*d.*, *i.e.*, 2*s.*, and a like sum to the Brotherhood of S. Laurence; William Jamys (21st June, 1502) gives 12*d.* *i.e.*, 12*s.*; John Raynold (31st March, 1505) gives two Patellas; Peronilla Rawlyn (21st January, 1509) a napkin of diaper. Besides the Brotherhoods of S. George and S. Laurence there was a Brotherhood of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, to which John Raynold left 4*d.*, *i.e.*, 4*s.* In connection with this Brotherhood there seems to have been an image in the church, for John Courle in 1504, besides leaving 20*d.*, *i.e.*, £1, to the high altar of S. Laurence, and like sums for the fabric and for S. George's Brotherhood, he gives 12*d.*, *i.e.*, 12*s.*, for the sustentation of a light kept before the image of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. This John seems to have carried on the business of a weaver, for he leaves to his son Thomas "4 textrina, or instruments for weaving, commonly called Comes." One parishioner who desires to be buried before the image of S. Katrine gives nine sheep to the image, no doubt for the maintenance of a light.

Thomas Laycroft makes his will on 5th October, 1530; he had been one of the bailiffs of the Abbey, and was severely reprimanded by Bishop Fox in 1506. He makes the following bequests:—



NORTH TRANSEPT SCREEN.

(From within.)

Dr. Latham's Collection.

To face p. 184.]

[See p. 181.

1. High Altar of S. Laurence, 1*s.* 8*d.*
2. Brotherhood of S. George, 3*s.* 4*d.*
3. Brotherhood of Jesus, 4*d.*
4. God's rode in the Abbay syde, 4*d.*
5. Church works of S. Laurence, 6*s.* 8*d.*
6. Trinite light, 4*d.*
7. S. Anthony's light, 2*d.*
8. S. Clement's light, 2*d.*
9. S. Rasymus'(Erasmus')light, 2*d.*
10. S. Katerin's light, 2*d.*
11. S. Blase's * light, 2*d.*
12. S. John's light, 2*d.*

To the mending of the cawsey towards Tymsbery, 1*s.* 4*d.*

My house in the Hundred to John Laycroft my son for life, and afterwards to the Howse of Edyngton.

John Beyre of Asthold in 1532 gives to S. George's Brotherhood a cow, and the cow is not to be sold, but to be put forth to hyre, paying yearly for mayntayng of the priest 8*d.*, and 4*s.* to *the bede rolle.* This is the only mention of S. George's bede roll.

These gifts to the parish church and brotherhoods continue to the time of the Suppression of the Monastery in 1539 and beyond that period. Stephen Hayes in his will, dated 7th July, 1537, bequeathes to his son Thomas "my stocks of bees; I will that he shall find a 2lb. taper—a hallfe of wax—before the rode (rood or great Crucifix), in the Abbay of Romsey." In the next year, 13th January, 1538, William Hill bequeathes for S. George's light 1lb. of wax, for S. John the Baptist's 1lb. of wax and a like bequest to the lights of S. Christopher, S. Roche, and S. Clement. In this same year, 31st December, 1538, a brotherhood once mentioned in previous wills is spoken of. John Pydman bequeathes unto the Brotherhood of Jesus in the Parish Church, a sheep, called a wether; and in 1540, 13th April, John Bull, a wealthy mercer, desires to be buried in the Chapel of Jesus within the Parish Church of S. Laurence, and leaves money to S. George's Guild, which was therefore still maintained.

* Bishop Blase, the patron saint of weavers; an inn with this sign survives to the present day in Romsey.

As late as 13th and 23rd January, 1544, John Horeloke, who desires to be buried in the bodye of the Church of Romeseye in the est (east) syde of the fonte there, leaves 1*s.* 8*d.* to the High Altar and to the use of the same Church a cowe, which Thomas George hath in keping, and gives to the use of the fraternitie of S. George his clothe Racke, that is overryght the house and tenement of the said fraternitie.

The bequest of John Barwyke, 13th December, 1539, to this Brotherhood of a cow is worded so quaintly that it must be quoted in full:—

"To the Brotherhood of S. George, a live cow worth 8*s.* And I will that the cow be put forth to hire for 12*d.* by the year, and to answer the cow for ever alive. Provided always that if the cow die of murrain or any other sickness within the space of eight years following, then I will that my executors shall buy another cow in the stead, so the cow shall not die within the space of eight years to no man's loss but mine. And after that year ended I will that the parish, that is to say the Brotherhood, do maintain a cow alive at the cost of the said Brotherhood and of no man's else for ever. And if the Brotherhood refuse thus to do at any time, then I will that my executors do take the cow again from them or the price which should be 8*s.* and to dispose it among poor people to pray for my soul," etc.

One more point must be quoted from this will, his executors are to find a priest to sing for him and his friends in the Church of Romsey for the space of a year, having twenty nobles for his wage, the priest is to be a quireman and to kepe the quire daily.

In 1534, just before the suppression of the monasteries, the chantry of St. George was valued at £4. 16*s.* 8*d.*, but amongst the Certificates of Colleges (time of Edward VI) a view of this chantry is given, and throws further light upon the nature of the chantry and its value. It is described as:—

"One Chauntry or Brotherhood of St. George. The said Chauntrye or Brotherhede of Seynt George ys sutwate and founded within the prshe Church of Seynt George in Romesey. The Inhabitants of the same prshe to have a prest to synge and say daily in the prshe Churche of Romesey as for the ayde and helpe of the Curate and for the ease of the pryshnors there. And the said Prest to have for hys salary or stipend as hereafter folowth :—The value of the said Chantry or Brotherhood by the yere, £8. 9*s.* 4*d.* For Rent resolute, £1. 7*s.* 2*d.* For the Prest, £6. For the Tenths, £1. 2*s.* 2*d.* Ornaments, plate, jeuelle, goods, catalls merly apperteyng to the said chauntre or brotherhood the worthe as apperyt by the Inventory praysed, £28. 10*s.*"

If money was worth twelve times its present value, and the capital from which the above income was drawn realized five per cent., this capital with the money value of goods would represent a total of some £2342, no inconsiderable sum for the parishioners to have got together.

Little remains to be told of the Brotherhood. In a grant by Henry VIII, 17th December, 1544, to a Messrs. Foster and Marden, a piece of meadow in Waldyng is spoken of as lying between the lands of the Brotherhood and those of Nicholas Welles. In 1606 the Brotherhood lands paid to the Crown £39. 15*s.* 4½*d.* as a fee farm rent for ever. The following extract from the Patent Roll of 1614, in the time of King James I, no doubt refers to this, and suggests that the Guild was then in existence :—

"Grant to Anne, Queen Consort, of a yearly rent or fee farm of £39. 16*s.* 5½*d.* from the manor of Romsey Extra except 2*s.* 4*d.* payable to the brotherhood of S. George in Romesey, for rent resolute, and £1 allowed to the Vicar of Romsey for rent or farm of a customary tenement ; to hold for term of life." 16th February.

A deed of 1654, preserved in the Town Hall Records, shows that these lands were sold to the Corporation.

In the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 27th April, 1829, an entry records a faint echo of the once honoured Brother-

hood :—"S. George's Day was observed here with the usual demonstrations of loyalty, ringing of bells, etc." Perhaps it is not too late to rescue a memory of the past, and at the same time encourage the patriotic spirit, by a renewed observance in Romsey of 23rd April, as the Feast of England's Patron Saint. The whole history of S. George's Guild, meagre as it is, points to a strong corporate feeling on the part of the townsmen with regard to their parish church, and indirectly indicates a sense of individual life on the part of the town from the middle or close of the fourteenth century. This feeling culminated in the very meritorious action of the parish, taken after the Suppression, by the purchase, on 20th February, 1544, of the Abbey Church itself for £100 for the use of the parishioners. This transaction will be described in a subsequent chapter.

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Ancient Correspondence. P.R.O.
Episcopal Register.
Ancient Wills—Somerset House, and Winchester Probate Registry.

CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 1405—1472.

THE MANOR COURT ROLLS.

"We are perhaps too much accustomed to think of 'the Religious Houses' as only the peaceful abodes of contemplation and retirement, and forget the immense amount of business that of necessity devolved upon them."

THE REV. R. H. CLUTTERBUCK, F.S.A.

Chapter XII.

THE MANOR COURT ROLLS.

WHEN Bishop William of Wykeham died, he left to Felicia Aas, a nun of Romsey, £5, and to each of the other nuns 13*s.* 4*d.*, and to the Abbess, Lucy Everard, five marks; he also remitted a debt of £40, due to him from the Abbey, which was to be applied to the church and cloister repairs. Felicia Aas is said to have been second cousin to the Bishop; if she may be identified with the daughter of Ralph Aas, mentioned in the De Banco Rolls of 1363–4, she must have been of mature age at the time of the Bishop's death, 27th September, 1404. She was appointed ruler of the Abbey soon after this event. There is no entry in Bishop Beaufort's Register of her appointment, but the Patent Roll [6 Henry IV, pt. 2] shows that the election took place between 30th July and 27th August, 1405.

One or two notes about the vicars at this time have survived. John Umfray, appointed in 1400, had a Papal indult granted him in 1404 for three years, while studying letters at a university, or residing in the Roman Court, or on one of his benefices. He was still vicar in 1413, when he acted as receiver of the Abbey, and he is mentioned by the steward in his account roll of Edyndon. In a will of one of the townsmen, John Keredyf, or Cardiff, dated 20th August, and proved 4th October, 1420, a further

reference is made to John Umfray, vicar of S. Laurence, to whom a bequest is left of 3*s.* 4*d.* No other mention of vicars occurs till John Kent exchanged the benefice of S. Laurence, Romsey, with John Bailey for the rectory of S. Laurence, Winchester, in 1452. This leaves a gap of thirty-two years, but if Vicar Kent had possession for twenty years before his exchange, which is quite possible, there may be only one, if any, name missing in the list of vicars. The average incumbency of the preceding vicars is about twelve years, the longest being twenty years and the shortest four years, with the exception of that of William de Bures, who only survived a few months in the dread period of the Great Pestilence.

The townsman John Keredyf, in his will, not only remembered the vicar of his parish, but also the Prior of Mottisfont, to whom he bequeathed 6*s.* 8*d.*, the convent there to pray for the souls of himself and his parents. He also left 12*d.* for the fabric of Winchester Cathedral, and 6*s.* 8*d.* for the fabric of Romsey Abbey and 6*s.* 8*d.* for the church of Abbott's Ann. He desired to be buried in the parish church of S. Laurence, and requested that a distribution of certain sums of money should be made to the various officers, as for instance to the clerk John Sexton and to the chaplain John Stapylforde.

A note in the Reeve's account roll of Edyngdon, 1413–14, is interesting. It says:—"Two geese as a gift to the chaplain celebrating mass in the chapel of S. Ethelfleda on S. Ethelfleda's day." Another account roll, apparently that of the steward or receiver, shows the income and expenses of the Convent; it is dated 1412–13, whilst Felicia Aas was still Abbess. The revenues were drawn from rents, from the Abbey farms, from the sale of works (operum), wool, corn, and malt, and from the perquisites of the manor courts; all these were collected from Steeple Aishton,

Edyndon, Romeseye, Moure Malewayn near Romsey, Sydemanton, and Ichenstoke; they totalled a sum of £404. 6*s*. 0½*d*., perhaps some £6500 of present day money.

This Account Roll, printed overleaf, is of no little interest, since it gives an insight into the homely affairs of the Convent life, and deals with food, clothes, servants, horse-hire, repairs of buildings, and alms, and might, in part, be the balance sheet of any large household.

It may be worth noticing that rents and grain yield the larger part of the income; and that, if the various expenses and repairs, numbered 4 and 5, be taken together, the expenditure resolves itself into about four equal sums.

The cost of the Abbess' establishment seems to have equalled and exceeded that of the sisters; but she appears to have paid the servants' wages, and this and some other items may have benefitted the Convent at large. The largest item of expense in the whole account is that incurred by the Abbess and her separate household, £51. 4*s*.; and next to this comes "tenths" paid to the King, £40. 13*s*. 4*d*.

The total expenditure exceeded the receipts by £28. 19*s*. 2*d*., but the account was altered by another £8. 0*s*. 8*d*. being spent on the Romsey mills, and after taking this and several arithmetical mistakes into account the deficit would seem to have been £35. 13*s*. 3½*d*., or[1] about £570. 12*s*. 8*d*., of present day money—a rather considerable sum, if it continued year after year.

The gift of £10 to Bishop Henry Beaufort should be noticed; this Bishop made or attempted to make several pilgrimages to the Holy Land, but this one is not referred to in the account given of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

[1] Using 16 as the multiplier.

ACCOUNT ROLL OF

RECEIPTS.

	£	s	d	£	s	d
1.—Aishton.						
Rent	56	2	3¾			
Farm	12	12	0			
Sale of works	6	11	0¼			
Sale of wool (see under Edyndon)						
Sale of corn and stores	20	6	8			
Perquisites of Courts [*i.e.* Manor Courts] ...	6	8	0			
				102	0	0
2.—Edyndon.						
Rent	26	4	8¼			
Sale of works	6	8	4¾			
Sale of wool	30	0	0			
Sale of corn and stores	16	8	0			
Perquisites of Courts	2	0	0			
				81	1	1
3.—Romseye.						
Rent	53	0	11½			
Farm	3	0	0			
Sale of works	2	4	4½			
Sale of wool	30	0	0			
Sale of corn and stores	54	6	8			
Perquisites of Courts	4	0	0			
				146	12	0
4.—More Malewayn.						
Rent	2	0	0			
Sale of corn and stores	10	0	0			
				12	0	0
5.—Sydemanton.						
Rent	3	3	0½			
Sale of works	2	0	3½			
Sale of corn and stores	26	6	8			
Perquisites of Courts	0	12	0			
				32	2	0
6.—Ichenestoke.						
Rent	9	5	7¾			
Sale of works	3	0	11¾			
Sale of corn and stores	17	4	4			
Perquisites of Courts	1	0	0			
				[1]30	11	0
Total receipts	£404	6	0½	[1]404	6	1

Totals under Sources of Income extracted from above.

	£	s	d
1.—Rent	149	16	7¾
2.—Farms	15	12	0
3.—Works	20	5	0¾
4.—Wool	60	0	0
5.—Corn and stores	[2]144	12	8
6.—Courts	14	0	0
Total receipts as above ...	£404	6	0½
Deficit balance	[2]404	6	4½
	[3]18	19	2
Total	[3]£423	5	6½

[1] Error: ½*d.* too much. [2] Error: 4*d.* too much.
[3] £10 too little, by which the account does not balance.

ROMSEY ABBEY FOR A. D. *1412.

EXPENSES.

	£	s	d	£	s	d
1.—The Convent.						
(a) For clothing	23	7	8			
(b) Their kitchen (coquina)	38	4	4			
(c) For pittances	18	10	0			
(d) The chief kitchen (percoquina)	25	15	10			
				105	17	10
2.—The Abbess.						
(a) Provisions for herself and household, and divers expenses, during the year ...	51	4	0			
(b) In gifts	8	12	0			
(c) In liveries for the household, and spices for the guest-house	18	14	4			
(d) In fees of servants	30	6	8			
				[1]110	6	8
3.—[Extra conventual.]						
(a) Repairs of the houses of the Romsey mills †	38	3	10			
(b) For pleas (*i.e.*, in courts)	5	8	0			
(c) For necessaries	3	6	10			
(d) Annuities to the Convent, and to king's clerks	18	13	4			
(e) Tenths to the King	40	13	4			
(f) Procurations, etc.	1	14	8			
				108	0	0
4.—[Various.]						
(a) Alms for the poor	8	19	4			
(b) Wine for nobles visiting the Abbess, etc. ...	6	13	4			
(c) Broken crockery, and mending pots in divers offices	2	13	8			
(d) Shoeing horses of the Lady's household, in horse hire, and expenses of men riding on the Lady's business	3	1	0			
(e) In oblations, of the Lady and her household	0	14	0			
(f) In a gift to Lord Henry, Bishop of Winchester, on his return from the Holy Land	10	0	0			
				[2]32	0	4
5.—Repairs.						
(a) Repairing the houses of Aishton Manor, and other expenses there	20	1	6½			
(b) Similar expenses at Edyndon	13	3	4			
(c) ,, ,, ,, Romesey	22	0	10			
(d) ,, ,, ,, Stoke	10	0	0			
(e) ,, ,, ,, Sidemanton	8	10	0			
(f) ,, ,, ,, Le Mour	3	6	10			
				[3]77	0	8½
Total expenses	£431	18	8	433	5	6½

	£	s	d
[1]	108	17	0
[2]	32	1	4
[3]	77	2	6½

Errors in addition, by which the total should be less by £1. 6s. 10½d., as in the first column.

* 14 Henry IV, ended March 24th, 1413.

† Altered to £46. 4s. 6d., but the difference, £8. 0s. 8d., is not added to the total.

Maud Lovell succeeded on the death of Abbess Felicia Aas, but again the Episcopal Register fails to help in fixing the date of election, the second Register book of Bishop Henry Beaufort, for the years 1416–1447, having been lost. This Register, says a note in the Bishop's first book, was lent to the King, who it may therefore be supposed omitted to return it. The Patent Rolls, however, show that the Abbess Maud's election took place in 1417, and that the proceedings on this occasion lasted from 25th October to 18th November. This lady remained Abbess of Romsey for a longer period than any, either of her predecessors or successors. When she died, before the end of April, 1462, her rule had exceeded the next longest abbacy, that of Abbess Isabella de Camoys, by about a year. The character and inner life of the Convent at this time, owing to the loss of the Episcopal Register, is even less manifest than in the preceding years, and it is to all intents and purposes a sealed book.

Direct information relating to the Convent being so meagre, it may be worth while to call attention to an old house, which formerly stood in Romsey, and bore traces of fifteenth century work. Dr. Latham, in his MS. collections for a history of Romsey, gives the following account:

"At the upper end of Church Street on the left, opposite the turning to Porter's Bridge, stands the house in which it is said that Sir William Petty was born. This house has undergone many alterations within the memory of persons now living,[1] and it appears to have been occupied till lately by persons who dealt in wool, as no doubt did Anthony, the father of Sir William Petty, who is said to have been a clothier in Romsey, and to have resided here. There are store-houses for wool in the two roofs of the house, as may yet be seen by the large doors opening thence into the street. The front of the house is of brick as far as the

[1] Dr. Latham lived at Romsey 1796–1819, and died at Winchester in 1837.

ANCIENT HOUSE IN CHURCH STREET.

Birthplace of Sir William Petty.

Dr. Latham's Collection.

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second floor; the rest is of timber lathe and plaster. The inside bears evident marks of a much superior age. The ceilings of several rooms below have zigzag fillets of wood, painted black, with the appearance of gilding on the edges, about two to three inches broad, standing out an inch from the ceiling. This is conspicuous in the room now made use of as the kitchen, and was once, no doubt, the great hall of the house, as may be conjectured from the original chimney, and from the curious workmanship which extends from the top of the chimney place to the ceiling."

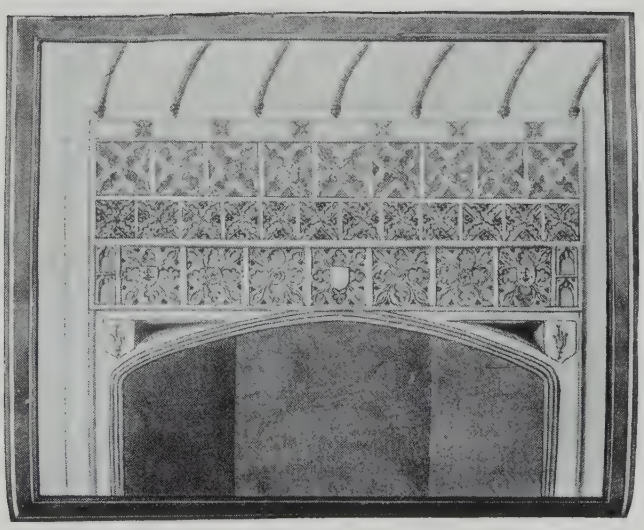
Mr. Latham then describes the chimney piece at length, but his sketch is better than any description. He draws attention to a merchant's mark on the two outside shields in the lower compartment, and to the devices of a bear and staff, and lion passant guardant, on the shields of the upper compartment. He adds that the house was consumed by fire with the tenements adjoining on Thursday, December 14th, 1826. The chimney piece is to be dated about the year 1460, and belongs to the period when Maud Lovell was still Abbess.

The merchant's mark is of special interest, because it is found again on an altar frontal of about the year 1450, which formerly belonged to the church, but which is now missing. The mark establishes a connection between the owner of the house and this piece of fifteenth century embroidery. The latter is described by Mr. Latham as of crimson velvet cloth richly embroidered with gold, the fruit or flower ornaments having green leaves. This handsome piece of needlework was, he adds, hung round the pulpit of Romsey church for many years, until a new cloth was given by Mrs. Delicia Barton, wife of Robert Barton, Esq., of Rownhams. The length of the remains of the cloth, when used as a pulpit-hanging, was 9 ft. 10 in. by 3 ft. 8 in. It may be compared with a cope of about the same date, the remains of which are carefully preserved in a frame, now hanging in the north choir aisle.

Johanna Bryggys succeeded Matilda Lovell in 1462, the proceedings connected with her election lasting from 26th April to 30th May. Joan Forde, the Sub-Prioress, Katharine Shyffeld, Katharine Stadham, and Thomasine Assheley, nuns, are mentioned, but the last three could not be found in the Convent at the time of the election; it is doubtful if Katharine Shyffeld was a member of the community at this time, the two others appear in a list of 1478. In 1471 the Abbess, with two of the nuns and a fourth lady, together with a Prioress, are found dining and supping in the Hall of Winchester College on the last Monday in the last quarter of the year. This was in the time of Warden John Baker of Aldermaston, Berks.

A great deal of information about the business of the Abbey may be learnt from its Manor Court Rolls, a large number of which, relating to Romsey Extra, are preserved in the Public Record Office. They extend over a period of many years, beginning in Richard II's reign, 1395, and continuing, though not consecutively, to 1597–8. The gaps between the existing rolls are wide; for instance, no rolls appear to have survived from 1560 to about 1588. Whilst therefore the information to be derived from these records would be somewhat fragmentary, yet it is probable that a detailed study of them, together with the study of old wills and other documents, would yield a good deal of information about former inhabitants, the names of places, and the descent of lands and houses. Neither time nor space will permit of such a complete study here, but some interesting facts may be culled from the earlier series. These comprise rolls for the following years:—

1395. 27th September.
1428. 3rd November.
1429. 11th April and 6th October.
(?) 14th April.
1434. 22nd October.
1435. 4th May and 12th November.
1436. April.
1437. (?)
1444. Second Tuesday after Easter, *i.e.*, Hocke-day.



CHIMNEY-PIECE OF HOUSE IN CHURCH STREET.—CIRCA 1460.

Dr. Latham's Collection.

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[See p. 197.

These rolls belonged to the Halmote, or Court Baron of the Manor, that is, the meeting of the tenants of the Manor for the transaction of business. The business consisted of "the transfer of land to tenants, the making of bye-laws for the regulation of the village communities, and the exaction of penalties for the breaking of rules." The Romsey Court Rolls exhibit a great variety of detail.

BOND TENANTS.

Some inhabitants were bond tenants, over whom the Abbess as lady of the manor had certain rights.

John, son of Peter Strecche, and Thomas, his brother, from 1428 to 1436 betook themselves outside the demesne of the Abbess; again and again the tenants are ordered under penalties to find them, but they never seem to have been successful. Another native, John Withgere, of Lee, paid 6*d.* annually to live outside the lordship. One Walter Gabbell, in 1435, pays a fine of 10*s.* to marry his daughter either without or within the lordship, wherever and to whomsoever he pleases.

In 1444 another one of the family of Strecche, William junior, who held a messuage (*i.e.*, a dwelling-house with out-buildings suitable for a country farm) and a workland, is reported to have left his holding and gone to parts beyond the seas, and is a soldier in the service of the King, and has six acres of wheat, five acres of barley, one acre of pease, and one acre of oats, which tenure and corn are committed to the care of his brother Walter. There is no fine in this case.

HERIOTS AND FINES.

The conditions under which tenants held property varied greatly. For instance:—

John Mascall dies in 1434. He holds a messuage and thirteen acres of arable land and two acres of pasture. At his death a black horse worth 10*s.* falls to the Lady of the Manor as a heriot, and another horse for a mortuary or payment at death. His wife Johanna has standing in the property during her life.

In 1428 William Skyllyngham gives as a fine two goslings and one flagon of red wine for license to give all lands, tenements, meadows, moors and pastures which he holds of the Lady, by fine to whomsoever he shall please for the term of his life. The property is to be well maintained, and rent and all services due and accustomed are to be well and faithfully paid. After his decease the Lady is to have a heriot of 6*s.* 8*d.* if he have not a large hog in his possession.

In 1395 Richard Trappe held a gavelzeld and a cotceland in Kupernham. At his death the Lady, *i.e.*, the Abbess receives as heriot a horse worth 9*s.* and an ox worth 7*s.* 6*d.*, and the holding remains with his wife.

In 1395 Agneta Wiggelee surrenders into the hands of the Lady her holding in Bannok Street, except one chamber sufficient for herself, to the use of John Wheler. There is no heriot, but Richard, son of Walter Wheler, gives a fine of 3*s.* 4*d.* for the cottage and curtilage; he is to render rent and services and to do fealty.

In 1395 Alice, the widow of Sir Thomas West (see Ch. X), a progenitor of the Lords De la Warre, who held of the Abbey in fee the Manor of Testwode and the Mill of Totyngton, *i.e.*, Totton, died, and a heriot of a jument or draught beast worth 20*s.* fell to the Abbess. The son of Thomas West succeeded to the property, and was called to do fealty and pay a fine or relief. Before 1428 Reginald West had succeeded to the property, and is ordered again and again to do homage and fealty and to pay his relief. The demand was still going on in 1434, and it would seem therefore as if there was a deliberate resistance to the claim and ancient right of the Lady of the Manor on the part of the West family.

MILLS.

The letting and repairs of the mills were matters of much importance.

In 1428 William Berell took of the Lady of the Manor the site for a new fulling mill (for thickening cloth by a process of pressing). The mill was to be built on the water course called

Chavy, between a meadow called Smalemede and land called Evy; the building was to be finished within the year. His term was to be good for sixty-one years at a rent of 4*s.*, but he was not to take fish without leave of the Abbess. He was to do all repairs and to deliver the mill up in good and working order at the end of his lease. He was to keep the ground dry for a space of eight feet between his mill and Evy land, and maintain the banks of the river below, above, and around the mill. He may have a foot path (*semitam pedalem*) to his mill across the said meadow. He is permitted to remove (*amovere*) an island lying in the water course, and to have the pasture which William Melverne was wont to have belonging to the said island.

In 1434 John More of Asshfold agreed with the Abbess Matilda Lovell and the Convent to take their four mills. Two of the mills were in a building called Townmill, and the other two in a building called Medmill. He was to have all the fishings of eels. His lease to be for seven years at a rent of £10. 6*s.* 8*d.*, to be paid quarterly, together with 450 eels called shaftelynges and 30 large eels called skyveres. Elaborate conditions as to repairs are added, together with a clause binding the miller to grind for the Lady's household and for the horses.

The rules relating to the grinding of corn were strict; all tenants were bound to bring their corn to the Lady's mills and to no other. In 1444 the tenants of Lee and Wobbury near Toothill got into trouble because most of them took their corn to the mill of John Grenefeld at Skidmore; in future a fine of 12*d.* was to be inflicted, unless a good reason could be given.

WATERCOURSES.

The watercourses, of which there were many, sometimes gave trouble.

In 1428 the lands and pastures at the More by Lee (*i.e.*, Moorecourt) were inundated by a flood at night through the fault of Alice Reynes. A fine of 6*d.* was imposed, and if matters were not set right by the next court a further penalty of 6*s.* 8*d* was threatened.

In 1436 a complaint was made by William Bretere against William Smyth of Lee because he did not make his stathez [hatches] next the watercourse flowing there, whereby the plaintiff's meadows were flooded and damage done to the value of 6*s.* 8*d.*

POACHERS.

The waters were a temptation at times to poachers.

In 1435 John Sexsteyn and Thomas Talear stopped the watercourse next Stretmede with a dam and took the Lady's fish, to her grave hurt, with pottes and other instruments. They were fined 6*d.* each.

In 1444 Thomas Welynow placed snares called hare-pipes within the warren of the Lady at Wollys Downe in Wobbury and took many hares. He is to be attached by writ for the purpose of making restitution to the Lady.

DISPUTES BETWEEN TENANTS.

Sometimes there were disputes between tenants.

Adam Bury cut down an oak growing in a certain garden at Bromcroft in Wobbury between the holding of Adam and the land of Thomas Shotter. The latter proceeds to unjustly claim the oak, alleging that it was growing upon his ground. The Homage, however, are of a contrary opinion, and Adam is permitted to remove the oak.

REPAIRS AND BUILDING.

Neglect in keeping tenements in repair caused much trouble.

In 1434 John Peverell, of Cupernham, had neglected to repair his tenement according to the orders of the Court, and was fined 20*d.*, and was further threatened with a fine of 3*s.* 4*d.* if the neglect continued.

In 1436 Will Smyth, of Lee, had allowed his tenements to perish for want of repairs, and is fined 2*d.* His offence was the worse because the Lady had given him a good oak worth 40*d.* to

ALTAR FRONTAL.—CIRCA 1450.

Dr. Latham's Collection.

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be used for the repairs, and he had allowed the oak to lie unused to rot and waste; he is threatened with a fine of 20*d.* This William Smyth, who bears the alias of Stontheroute, seems to have been a quarrelsome person, for in 1437 he is fined 6*d.* for assaulting and insulting Walter Streeche, the Lady's bailiff.

In 1444 John More, of Halterworth, has not sufficiently carried out his repairs, and will have to pay 40*d.* if the business is not complete by the next Court day.

A time limit seems to have been imposed on the building of new houses by tenants. John Basset in 1444 had built a new house in Lullane, and had finished the carpentry work, but had not roofed or enclosed it; this he must do by the next Court under a penalty of 20*s.*

RIGHTS OF WAY AND INCLOSURES.

Ancient rights of way were jealously guarded.

Walter Bernard in 1395 stops a way by which the Abbess's sheep cross from Prestland to Stretmed. On the other hand, no new ways are permitted to become customary. Walter, servant of John Forester, makes a way with a cart and horse through the ground of the Abbess; he is to be distrained.

Inclosures were another important matter.

John Honchon, in 1444, inclosed one acre in Northgaston with a quick hedge, but this land should be common land after harvest.

Again a croft next Northgaston called Silvercroft, held by John Catell as inclosed and separate, was from ancient time common land after harvest, the tenants are therefore to throw down the fences.

A further point comes up, the tenants were accustomed to have a common way from ancient times for driving and carrying from Spitelstreet to Northgaston through a certain croft called Homcroft, which Thomas at Roke holds separate. The tenants are to pull down the fence across the way after harvest.

PLACE NAMES.

Northgaston, or the district now lying about the railway station, has retained its ancient name; possibly the footpath running at the present day from the old toll-gate house to the station follows the line of the disputed way mentioned above. But whilst the name of Northgaston has survived, the old name of the street by the toll house has disappeared.

Spittlestreet, as it was called in old days, was so named because of the Hospital of S. Mary Magdalene which stood in it. Spittle Croft, or Little Broomclose, of some three to four acres, was bounded by the highway going to Tadburne on the east, and by the Tadburne on the south. The Spittle or Hospital was contiguous to this close and nearer to Romsey. This Hospital is twice mentioned in the Patent Rolls, in 1317 and again in 1331, and is described as the Hospital of S. Mary Magdalene and S. Anthony. In the earlier year one John is granted royal protection for two years, whilst he travels about as proctor of the Hospital to solicit alms for lepers and other paupers. In the latter year a mandate is issued "to bailiffs and lieges to welcome Alan Unwyn, proctor for the leprous and poor persons in the Hospital, to collect alms for the relief of the inmates of the Hospital, now in extreme poverty. The "poure almys men and women of the spytell" are mentioned in a paper accompanying the accounts of the King's bailiff, after the suppression of the Monastery, and a list of names is given.

Beyond Northgaston lies *Cupernham*, or Kupernham, one of the ancient tithings. South of this on the hill stands *Whitenap*, anciently known as Wyttenharp. *Hauterworth* is easily recognised in the modern Halterworth. In it was a close called *Hillfields*, which is perhaps an earlier name for the more modern Highfield.

Luzborough magna and parva, "with a small house," are found in the Court Roll, and with it *Inslnesborough*, a name which has dropped out of use. *Ashfold* of the Court Roll has now become Ashfield, and in a will of 1532 it is called Asthold.

Wobbery next Touthill is the title of another tything in Romsey Extra which is now forgotten. The lordship of *Wolles* may perhaps be identified with Southwellys, in which stood Grove Place. It is described as north of Langelond.

The name *Skidmore*, in the Account Roll of 1539, is spelt Skydmoure, and is described as a part of the Manor of Southwell. This farm, together with all lands of this manor in Romsey, Elinge, and Nursselinge, were held by the Abbess and Convent from the Dean and Chapter of the King's free chapel within Windsor Castle; but just before the Suppression they were underlet to John Huttofte, gentleman, paying rent to the Windsor Chapter, and for quit rents and services to the Monastery, £2. 16*s*. 8*d*.

A pasture of twenty acres called *Stary Frith* is mentioned as part of the demesne of the Monastery, but the Dean and Chapter received £12 rent from it.

Lee was another tything, and here lay the *More*. The latter name survives in Morecourt. In the sixteenth century it appears to be known in two divisions as More Abbott and More Malwyn or Malens. The latter title appears to have arisen from a family named Malewayn, who are spoken of as early as the fourteenth century.

Broadlands appears frequently under the old spelling Brodelonde. In 1558 Sir Francis Fleming speaks of it thus, and gives the manor house to his wife Dame Jane, together with his lease of Staryeffrythe. The stream skirting the lawns of Broadlands gardens may be referred to in a concession to Thomas Mondy, *alias* Cucku. He was to have the whole tenth of the hay of the meadows from *Waldyngbrigge* to the parish of Nutshullying, *i.e.*, Nursling; for this he paid a rent of 4*s*. and a fine of a capon. Mr. Latham in his collections says that Waldenbridge, as he calls it, was rebuilt in 1686 of wood, with three arches, and mentions that in 1806 a Mr. Langridge remembered it. It had been taken down by Lord Palmerston in 1760, being out of repair, but the loss of it proved a great inconvenience to persons passing from thence to Lee and Toothill, who otherwise must go round by Romsey.

To the west of Broadlands and on the opposite side of the river is *Pauncefotes Hill.* The name is a very ancient one, and the land was held by a family of that name for many centuries, probably from the time of Domesday. The Abbey, however, had land in the neighbourhood, for in 1395 they claimed arrears of rent to the amount of 9*s.* 6*d.* for seventeen years, in respect of ten acres of ground in *Botenhanger* above Pauncefotes Hill, five acres of land in a field there, one hamma called *Whithitham*, and a wood called Emmotewode. There must have been below the hill a manor house at Mayhenstone or Maistone from early days. In 1231, 2nd, 3rd, and 17th August, Bishop Peter Quivil stayed there with his friend John Pauncefot, and wrote or sent a letter from there to Henry de Somersete, promoting him to the precentorship of Exeter Cathedral in commendam. A John, probably the same, is mentioned in the Parliamentary Writs of 1316 as Lord of the township of Maistone. A Margaret Pauncefot was a nun in the Abbey in 1333; and a Richard, whose name occurs many times between 1363 and 1395, was Seneschal or Steward of the Abbey in 1371. He, with others, made a gift to the Convent in 1367, and his property beyond this gift is described as the Manor of Mahneston, held of the Earl of Hertford by knight service, and worth yearly 100*s.* He was Sheriff of Hampshire, 1374–5. His son Thomas married Agnes, and is distrained by the Abbey for a rent of 9*s.* 6*d.* unpaid for seventeen years, in respect of Botenhanger on Pauncefoteshill.

About 1420 Sir John Pauncefote married Margaret, daughter of Sir John Beauchamp of the Holt in Cowarne. An Eleanora Bruges, one of the family of the Bridges of Cobberley, married a Thomas Pauncefot, and this perhaps took place towards the close of the fifteenth century. It is worth noting that the Abbess from 1462–72 was Joan Bryggys, and marks another connection between Romsey and the family of Bridges.

Walter Pauncefot died 22nd August, 1487, and left a young son Peter half a year old and more, and two daughters, Maud and Agnes; but Peter died 22nd August, 1492, and the Romsey male line of Pauncefot came to an end. Maud was then about

eleven, and Anne about nine years old. Walter's property in Hampshire is described as a manor called Pauncefot Hill beside Romsey, 300 acres of arable land, 200 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood, and 6*s.* 4*d.* quit rent issuing out of divers tenements in Romsey worth £12, held of the King, as of the Duchy of Lancaster by service of one knight's fee. Also a tenement in Romsey called Gaterygges Place, and three acres of arable and three acres of meadow land in Stanbryggesfelde in the parish of Romsey worth 26*s.* 8*d.* held of the Abbess. Richard Willoughby and his wife Isabel were occupying the property 22nd January, 1495.

The land called *Tappesham* is frequently spoken of in the Court Rolls. There were several fields bearing this name lying near together, and Tappesham Lane ran at right angles to Mill Lane. One of the fields lies across the water right opposite the west end of the church between the two mills, as may be seen in the tithe map. Langeley Mede, Gosemede, and Southgardene with Tappesham formed a small farm of twenty-three acres.

Paskirie, or le Pastyry, and Mynxton Mead adjoining it lay close to the Fulling Mills.

The position of *Priestlands* is well known in Romsey. *Periton* seems to have been not far from Banning Street, and is spoken of as a tenement between properties belonging to the Braisfield Chantry.

Other place names have occurred in the course of this chapter, and others are to be found in the Court Rolls and in many other deeds, but it is not easy to identify them. It seems a pity that so many old names should have fallen into disuse and have been forgotten, for place names are the milestones in the history of a town or village.

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CHAPTER XIII.

A.D. 1472—1523.

ABBESS ELIZABETH BROKE.

"For sum [nunnes] bene devowte, holy, and towarde,
And holden the ryght way to blysse;
And sum bene feble, lewde, and frowarde,
Now god amend that ys amys."

From "Why I cannot be a Nun," I, 311.

Chapter XIII

ABBESS ELIZABETH BROKE.

THE last years of the Convent's existence were eventful, but not edifying. A laxity of discipline seems to have crept in, and to have been the occasion, if not the source, of much trouble. Elizabeth Broke was elected Abbess on the death of Joan Bryggs, the *congé d'elire* was issued on the 27th May, 1472, and after the sisters had elected their Abbess, she appeared before the Bishop's Commissary in Romsey Church on the 16th June. Joan Skyllyng the Prioress, and others, who had interest in the election, were cited to appear, and no objection having apparently been made, the election was confirmed, and the royal writ, putting the new Abbess in possession of the temporalities or property of the Convent, was issued on the 22nd June.

Trouble followed, something was amiss with the Abbess, and six years after, on the 8th August, 1478, the Bishop, William of Waynflete, comes to Romsey and interviews the Abbess, "who, before him in her chamber within the Monastery, swore on the holy gospels that she would not procure any hindrance to the disposition of the Bishop." Then at 2 p.m. on the same day she appeared again before the Bishop, sitting judicially in the Chapter House, and acknowledged her submission in the following words :—

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Elizabeth Broke, Abbatisse of the Monastery of Romsey of the diocese of Wynchester, for certain reasonable causes movyng me submytte my person, my state, and dignitie and office Abbaciall. Also the admynystracion and disposicion of all maner of persons, servants and godes of the said monastery perteynyng yn any maner wise to me, by reason of the said dignyte and office Abbatisshall, unto you my lord and ordynary Lord William, by the grace of God, Bisshoppe of Wynchester. And as much as lieth yn me or may perteyne to me, I giffe fre and full powre to you my lord foresaid to dispose, ordeyne, reforme, correcte, injoin, decree, and to directe alle the premysses and alle manner of maters an causes perteyning to me or concernyng me, my person and dignyte or office Abbatishall in any maner of wise, and the persons, servants, and goodes aforesaid and everych of them. And I promitte to obey and to stonde to youre disposicion, ordynance, reformacion, correction, injuncion, decrees and direccion, to be made and hadde by you my lord aforesaid, in these premysses and everyche of theym and to make your said disposician, ordynance, etc., to be kept by every person and servante of the said monastery, by this boke conteynyng the holy gospelles, touched bodyly by me."

She swears that she made the submission of her own free will, without compulsion, nor was she led to this by deceit or fraud.

On the next day, the 9th August, in a high (*i.e.*, an upstairs) and inner chamber, situate between a certain high oratory or chapel and the great high chamber of the Abbess, Elizabeth Broke prayed the Bishop to accept her resignation and to declare the vacancy of her office. This he did, and repeated his acceptance and declaration in the Chapter House on the 10th August, the day following. Letters were despatched to the King announcing the vacancy on the 11th asking licence to elect, and the *congé d'elire* or licence is dated the 17th August. It was not, however, till the end of the month, on the 31st August,

that the sisters proceeded to arrange for the election ; they then chose the 9th September for this purpose. On that day the Mass of the Holy Spirit was celebrated at the High Altar, and twenty-five sisters assembled, including Johanna Skyllyng, the Prioress. One sister, Margaret Taylard, was represented by proxy, Johanna Serell voting for her ; the Rector of Edington, who held a stall, and a vote in chapter, was represented by Isabel Morgan ; and Edith Holewey stood for Oliver Dynham, the Canon and Prebendary of S. Laurence the Greater. After singing the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus," and giving the warning to those who might be under censure and unable to vote, the assembly decided to elect "per compromissum," that is to say, by choosing certain persons to elect in the name of the Convent. They chose William Bishop of Winchester and Richard (*i.e.*, Beauchamp) Bishop of Salisbury [1450–1481], and granted them full power of electing a nun of the Monastery as Abbess until Tuesday next, the 15th September.

On this day, at 9 o'clock in the morning, Bishop Richard of Salisbury refused to elect and returned the nuns' commission. The Chapter met at once and chose again to elect "per compromissum," but in a modified form. About the eleventh hour before noon they deputed and chose the said Richard "compromissarium," and granted him full power until 4 p.m. to elect as Abbess, by the secret votes of all the nuns, a nun of the Monastery, on whom the greater and saner part of the whole Chapter should direct their votes. This power Bishop Richard accepted. After the secret voting it appeared that the sisters had chosen Elizabeth Broke and re-elected her ; she herself had voted for Matilda Casewyk, and Katharine Statham for Edburga More ; these were the only exceptions. The Bishop then and there elects her as Abbess. The Prioress

and Convent, Elizabeth Broke alone excepted, give power to Master David Husbond to publish the election to clergy and people, in the vulgar tongue, and this done they take Elizabeth Broke to the High Altar singing "Te Deum"; and certain prayers having been said over her, Master David before the High Altar solemnly declared the election in the vulgar tongue to the clergy and people assembled in a multitude.

Three sisters, Isabel Morgan, Joan Paten, and Anne Rowse, are chosen to obtain the consent of the elect. They go to her, in a certain ground floor parlour, within the dwelling-house of Master John Grene, B.D., perpetual vicar of the parish church of Romsey, tell her of her election, and pray her to consent to it. She replies that she must deliberate what would seem to her most prudent to do in the matter. About 3 p.m. they many times beseech her to consent to the election, in the presence of witnesses and notaries, and at length Elizabeth, not wishing to resist the Divine will, consents to the wishes of those who had voted, and to her election.

An event which had taken place in the earlier part of the day gives the full explanation as to the "reasonable causes," which led her to resign. The Bishop of Salisbury, about the same time that he returned the sisters' commission, *i.e.*, about 9 a.m., received in the Chapter House letters of commission from the Bishop of Winchester sealed with his [oblong?] seal. From this letter it appears that Elizabeth Broke had prayed to be absolved from the crimes of perjury, and adultery with one John Placy. The Bishop, as may be supposed, uses severe words of condemnation, and the mystery of her resignation ceases to be a mystery; the cause for it is only too "reasonable." What remains a mystery is her re-election. This does not seem to have been altogether unforeseen, as may be gathered from the account of the penance imposed by the Bishop:—

THE SANCTUARY.—TEMP. 1806–1816.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 214.]

"Then and there publicly Elizabeth knelt and said the Lord's Prayer and the angelical salutation," and provision was made that in the event of her being Abbess in the monastery, she should abstain from the use of the pastoral or abbatial staff, the sign of authority, for the space of seven years. The account adds that the Bishop of Salisbury then and there absolved her, before any election was made or any provision was arranged about her. How was it possible that one accusing herself of such grave crimes could even be thought of as possibly re-elected to the highest dignity in the Convent? The perjury had been committed before the Bishop, sitting judicially, and may have been incurred by the Abbess in an effort to exculpate herself, when accused, on some previous occasion, of the other crime of adultery. The coupling of the crimes together suggests some connection between them. It should be added that her unchastity may have been contracted at an earlier period of her life, before she was a nun at all. Charity and reason both point to the existence of some mitigating circumstances, and the fact of her re-election may indicate that she had natural gifts for the office, if she had used them rightly. The re-election, however, did not prove a happy one, either because she had not become a good woman, or because she was broken by the severe ordeal through which she had passed, and those under her took advantage of the scandal and its attendant consequences.

The royal assent to the election is dated the 21st September. The Bishop, on the 20th of the same month, orders that objectors to the election be cited to appear on Saturday, the 3rd October, and commissions his Chancellor, Master David Husbond, Doctor of Decrees, Henry Ervin, B.D., and Michael Cleve, to hear objections, and if there are none, to induct and install the Abbess, which was done by Master Walter Hodgis, the official of the

Archdeacon of Winchester. A letter was written to the King for the restoration of the temporalities on the 3rd October, and the deed for accomplishing this is dated the 14th October, two months having been occupied in the attempt to repair this grave and sad affair.

Whether Elizabeth received back her pastoral staff and with it the full power of administering the affairs of the Abbey at the end of seven years is unknown. If so, she must have been again deprived, which seems unlikely. It appears probable that she was not trusted with full control for twelve or thirteen years, for under Bishop Courtney the Chancellor, Michael Cleeve, acting under a commission, restores her to the full privileges of her office. The Bishop says that he has decided to do this in consideration of her merits and reformation of character. This was in 1491, but in 1492 Archbishop Morton ordered a visitation of the monasteries of the Winchester Diocese, and commissioned Robert Shirborne, Treasurer of Hereford Cathedral, to carry out the business. The Abbess confessed to a debt of £80, a sum representing nearly £1000 to-day, "she suspected that the nuns made egress through the church gates, and prays that they may not frequent taverns and other suspected places." Isabel Morgan, Prioress, testified that the nuns frequented taverns, and went into the town without leave. One of the nuns complained that their sins and faults were not punished, and that the doors were not kept shut.

These, and many other points which are given on the testimony of a number of the sisters at the Visitation, show that there was much irregularity going on, and that discipline had well-nigh disappeared. Special stress is laid upon the bad management of the Monastery's finance. The Abbess, it is said, had come under the evil influence of one Terbock, whom she had appointed Receiver or Steward,

and he, if the sisters are to be believed, was dishonest and grasping, and played the part of the evil genius of the Monastery at this time.

It may not be out of place to point out that the Archbishop's visitation deals mainly with faults of administration. The debt was certainly grave, the lack of discipline even more grave, but if any excuse may be found it will be in the unhappy position of the Abbess. She had been for years deprived of her full authority, the respect of her sisters must have been seriously impaired, and she may well have been a broken woman. Advantage would be taken of these matters by the less amenable spirits in the Monastery, and she may well have lent in financial matters too heavily upon the advice of the Steward, who was anything but scrupulous. When scandal has been, on any occasion, attached to one in high place and authority impaired, it is not surprising if quarrels and insubordination arise, or if bickerings and scandalous talk are found amongst subordinates. All this appears to have arisen as will be seen. Elizabeth Broke was culpable and perhaps wilful, acted weakly and no doubt foolishly, but it is also possible that the worst appears and that the worst was made of delinqencies. But when all has been said in mitigation of her offences it must be added that her re-election was a grave error, and the day on which she was reinstalled may be described as a black day in the annals of Romsey Abbey.

VISITATION BY COMMISSION OF ARCHBISHOP MORTON.

Visitation carried out by Master Robert Shirbourne, treasurer of Hereford Cathedral, vicar-general of the Archbishop, begun at S. Swithin's Monastery, Winchester, 29th October, 1492.

Visitation of the Monastery of Rumsey.

Dame Elizabeth Broke, Abbess, confesses that she owes to Terbocke a great sum, *viz.*, 80*l.*, as appears by a schedule shown by her.

Item, she prays that no nun keep her own house or domicile ("teneat apud se mansum seu domicilium") or receive anyone, man or woman, without the Abbess's leave.

Item, she deposes that nuns are suspected of going into the town by the church door.

Item, she prays that they may not frequent taverns and other suspected places.

Item, she prays that they may not go outside the monastery without her leave.

Item, she prays that an injunction be made that she should not pay a corody of 50*s.* or more, because there appears to be no cause why it ought to be paid.

Dame Isabel Morgan, Prioress, deposes that the nuns frequent taverns, and continually go into the town without leave. She says that the nuns consented together in sealing an instrument delivered to Terbock, and that for three years the said Terbock had, in part payment of a certain sum which the Abbess confesses that she owes to him, a manor extended at 40*l.*

Item, she deposes that the Abbess favours this Terbok too much.

Item, she prays that the intention of the founder may be observed in celebrating masses, because now the number of priests is diminished, first as regards the infirmary, and secondly as regards the chapel of S. Nicholas.

Item, she prays that an account be made of sales of woods or groves.

Item, she deposes that nothing ought to be sealed with the common seal unless done with advice of some prudent man of her house.

Item, she prays that injunction be made to the sisters and

Abbess that they choose no one as auditor without consulting the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Item, she deposes that the Abbess, as much as in her lies, granted a prebend to Sir Adrian.

Item, she prays that those men who are familiar with Terboke be driven from her house, and especially one called Write.

Item, she deposes concerning a cross and many other things given to Terbok by the Abbess.

Item, she prays that the rolls of account may be seen for those years in which Terbok was Steward.

Dame Anabil Dunsley deposes with the Prioress, and prays that John Write be forbidden to have continual access to the Abbess, because it is said that he begs from her money for Terbok.

Item, she deposes that the Abbess sealed certain indentures with her private seal.

Dame Cecily Suede deposes that she did not agree in sealing the writing sealed Terbock, and says that all the perversion of the house made by Terbock and worst fame (*famam pessimam*) of the monastery is caused by him.

Dame Joan Skilling deposes with the Prioress—

Item, she prays that the conventual services be sung in choir (? *inchorentur*).

Also she deposes concerning two mills withdrawn by the Abbess to the value of ten marks, now for two years, the profits of which ought to be given (*dimitti*) to the sisters.

Dame Joan Paten deposes that she told the Abbess that she did not wish to be concerned in the writing delivered to Terbock of the office of receipt. Also she complains and asks that the beer may be improved; also, concerning repairs not done in the monastery. Also, she prays that the nuns ought to observe divine services, and especially those in the Abbess's house.

Item, she says that they do not serve the refectory, nor any of the nuns, on days on which they are bound to do so.

Item, she prays that a nun who has been brought in (*inducta*), be restored to her place to which she is professed.

Item, she deposes that they have no priest in the infirmary.

Item, she deposes that the Abbess said that when the inquiry was finished, she would do as she had done before.

Item, she says that all things such as jewels belonging to the place are alienated and bound to Sir [Oliver] Dynham and Master Borton and some to others, as silver dishes and many other silver vessels.

She prays also that communication made be had with Sir Ralf French (? domino Radupho Gallico) because he does not celebrate in his parochial church, and says that she has no fitting confessor.

Item, she deposes that the doors are not closed at the tenth hour.

Item, she deposes that no sin of the nuns has been punished for seven years.

Item, she prays that no one go out of choir without leave.

Item, she deposes that people stand chatting in the middle of the choir.

Dame Thomasine Assheley says with the foregoing that she denied the sealing, but agrees in other things with dame Joan Paten.

Dame Edith Howell deposes that due reverence is not given to the officials (*officiariis*), nor are divine services observed. In other things she agrees with dame Joan Paten.

Item, she deposes that she did not consent to the sealing in word or mind.

Dame Anne Rowse deposes that she never agreed to sealing the office (of) Terbok.

Item, she deposes that the Prioress does not observe divine services or hours, by day or night. Also, she deposes that the Abbess does nothing towards the observance of religion.

Item, she deposes that offenders are not corrected.

Dame Joyce Rowse agrees with dame Joan Paten.

Item, she deposes that Terbok has a dwelling-house belonging to the Monastery, which is not repaired but almost in ruins, and a ruin.

Dame Joan Sutton agrees with dame Joan Paten in all things.

Dame Ellen Tawke deposes that Sir (dominus) John Dameram gave for repair of the chapel of Blessed Mary, twenty marks which are thought to have been squandered by the Abbess. In other things she agrees with dame Joan Paten.

Dame Christine Moore deposes that religion is not kept. In other things she agrees with Joan Paten.

Item, she deposes that they used to be in the dormitory at the eighth hour, but now they have no fixed hour.

Dame Mary Tisted agrees with dame Joan Paten.

Dame Margaret Strowde says as her sisters.

Dame Agnes Haynowe says that lamps are not kept, and this by fault or negligence of the sextoness.

Item, she deposes that "perduntur pecunie in quibus domina quando communicari debebat solebat bibere." (Can this mean that sums of money are lost, which the Abbess was accustomed to spend in drink, when she ought to have shared them with the nuns—money to be distributed at anniversaries, etc. ?)

Dame Agnes Skilling says with dame Joan Paten.

Dame Agnes Hervey agrees with her other sisters.

Item, she complains of the beer.

Item, that there be no further going into the chapel of Blessed Mary, in order to avoid danger and future evil.

Item, she deposes that Howell feeds his horses in ploughed places and meadows of the monastery.

Item, she prays that the doors of the monastery be closed day and night unless urgent necessity require otherwise.

Item, she prays that in going in and out of choir they go modestly and without noise.

Dame Emma Conney has only been in the place for half a year.

Dame Alice Widenstall agrees with Joan Paten.

Item, she deposes that the Abbess keeps in her own house three nuns.

Item, she deposes that one infirm (nun) is not looked after or ministered to as is fitting.

Dame Elizabeth Rowthale agrees with dame Joan Paten.

Some eight and a half years later, during the vacancy of the Archbishopric, and also of the see of Winchester, for the three months, 27th January to 26th April, 1501, the Prior of Canterbury, according to a recognised right, visited Romsey Abbey amongst other places. This was done on 27th March, 1501, by a commission given to Dr. Hede, and the account of the visitation is to be found in the "Sede vacante" register of the Priory. It is described as incomplete, much of the last folio being blank. This blank may have been left for the injunctions, which were very possibly never made, as the new Archbishop, Henry Dean, was elected on 26th April, or about a month later, and Bishop Fox was translated from Durham to Winchester some time in the spring, and the Prior may well have left the business in the Diocesan's hands.

On the sisters' own showing matters were in a very unhappy state. A summary of troubles points to :—

1.—A remissness of the Abbess in correcting the sisters, and cruelty with regard to them.

2.—The undue and great influence of the Chaplain of the Infirmary, Master Bryce, over the Abbess, to the hurt of everything and everybody ; and to a scandal which was rumoured about him and the Abbess.

3.—The decay of tenements in Romsey, and of the roofs of the chancel and dormitory which let in the rain, and the unsatisfactory state of the finance, the seal being no longer in proper custody.

The Visitation is of much interest, and is therefore given at some length. It shows contradiction, one nun declaring "omnia bene," but the evidence is strong enough to condemn

the unhappy Abbess of bad conduct and of neglect in regard to the sisters, and points to a deplorable dependence upon the Chaplain, who was unscrupulous, and of doubtful character.

This unhappy woman died soon afterwards on 12th May, 1502; but the evil sown was not easily eradicated, as the Register of Bishop Fox will show.

VISITATION BY DR. HEDE, COMMISSARY OF THE PRIOR OF CANTERBURY, 27TH MARCH, 1501.*

The Abbess stated that the statutory number of nuns was forty, that they did not take their meals in the frater but in certain rooms assigned to them by the Abbess, that there were no debts and no valuables pledged, that there was a secular chaplain in the Monastery according to their statutes.

Isabel Maryuleyn, prioress, testified to the due observance of the night and day offices; that the Abbess was very remiss in correcting the delinquencies of the sisters.

Cecily Reed, sub-prioress, had but little to say.

Joan Skelyng stated that the Abbess was wont to pay certain salaries to the nuns of 10*s.* or 6*s.* 8*d.*; that a great scandal had arisen concerning the Abbess and Master Bryce *super mala et suspecta conversatione*; that lately, at the instigation of Master Bryce, the Abbess had been negligent in correcting the sisters.

Joan Paten, chantress, said that tenements in the town of Romsey belonging to the Monastery were in decay through the fault of the Abbess; that since the coming of Master Bryce the Abbess had conducted herself badly towards the sisters, and that she would accept no one's advice but his; that since his coming she has not taken

* This account of the Visitation is copied from the Victorian County History of Hampshire.

her meals with the nuns, and that there were rumours of incontinence.

Thomasine Ashley, almoneress, stated that the bread had diminished in quantity; that one Gilbert de Wiltshire had letters pertaining to the Convent under the common seal without the consent of the Chapter; that the Abbess and her accomplices had broken open the chest in which the common seal was enclosed, and that Joyce Rowse, who had the custody of one key by the mandate of the late Bishop of Winchester, could testify to this.

Edith Holloway, cellaress, said that Mary Tystede and Agnes Harvey wore their hair long.

Anne Rowse, sextoness, said that the Abbess was somewhat remiss in correction, and made further charges of a pecuniary character against Master Bryce.

Joyce Rowse agreed with Thomasine Ashley as to the custody of the common seal and the dismissal of the holders of the keys; she further said that the Abbess under the influence of Master Bryce behaved cruelly towards her sisters, and that there was a great scandal about them; that the roof of the chancel was defective through the fault of the Abbess, and she gave particulars as to various defalcations in the priory accounts.

Maria Tystede, chantress, referred to the condition of the accounts in the time of the late Abbess, Joan Brygges, and said that rents which were then only 90 marks under the present Abbess had grown to 300 marks; but that the bread and cheese in the Convent had lessened in measure through the intervention of Master Bryce; that Bryce was suspected of being the father of a girl in Wiltshire; that houses in the town as well as the dorter and the chancel were in decay through the fault of the Abbess, and that Master Bryce kept two or three horses at the expense of

the Monastery; that he had obtained a large salary under the common seal as chaplain of the farmery, and that he sat at table with the Abbess, and that there was common scandal about them.

Ellen Tawke, third chantress, testified that the dorter and chancel were defective in their roofs; that the Abbess had been in that office for thirty years, but what gain she had brought the monastery she was ignorant, but rather believed that the annual rents had increased to 111 marks from 50; that the houses of the Monastery were in decay through the fault of Master Bryce, whose advice was followed by the Abbess, and that scandal had arisen about them.

Christine More, fourth chantress, said that the house was not in debt more than twenty marks, and that as for the rest it was *omnia bene.*

Avice Haynow said that the chancel and the dorter were in decay, so that if it happened to rain the nuns were unable to remain either in the quire, in the time of the divine service, or in their beds, and that the funds that the Abbess ought to have expended on these matters were being squandered on Master Bryce, and that there was a grave scandal about these two.

Agnes Harvey, sub-sextoness, made similar statements as to the roofs of the quire and dorter, and that the actual fabric of the Monastery in the stone walls was going to decay through the fault of the Abbess, and gave further particulars of the expenses incurred through Master Bryce. She also asserted that Emma Powes was guilty of incontinence with the vicar of the parish church.

Emma Powes, who had been professed in a certain priory (King's Mead) near Derby, and from that place had been removed to another priory in Hereford diocese, where she had been prioress, and thence had come to this house,

said that silence was not observed in the dorter, and that the roof of the quire and the lady chapel were in decay.

Alice Whytingstale, mistress of the school, said that the Abbess at various times had prohibited her from receiving the Eucharist and from making her usual confession, and that since the arrival of Master Bryce the Abbess had not conducted herself amicably towards her sisters. She also gave evidence as to the faulty roofs, and that a corrody had been granted to Master Bryce of the annual value of £20, and that he had caused a great scandal.

The testimony of six other nuns were also set forth of a brief character. The visitation is left incomplete, much of the last folio being blank.[1]

On the death of the Abbess, the Convent elected Judoca, *alias* Gaudeta or Joyce Rowse, who had been kitchener, or overseer of all that pertained to the department of the cooks. She was elected by the third method of election, *i.e.*, by acclamation, or the uncontradicted declaration of the common wish of the whole body of the sisters. All the accustomed formalities were used, lasting from 6th–18th June, 1502. The list of sisters who took part in her election will be found on pp. 236, 237. Anne Rowse and Anne Skelyng represented the Prebendary of Edington, John St. John, at the election. Two rooms are spoken of in which the elect remained during the closing part of the proceedings—"a base or ground floor chamber next the cloister," and "the hall of the house next the outer gate." These are worth mentioning, owing to the few indications surviving of the Abbey buildings. The choice of Joyce Rowse was unfortunate; she proved quite unfit to control the Convent at this difficult period of its history, and indeed her example proved a bad one to the rest of the community.

In January, 1507, the Bishop took steps to improve the

[1] Sede Vacante Register of Canterbury Priory.

state of the Convent. Of Bishop Fox, it has been said that "it was his especial care to look after the discipline of the conventual houses of nuns." In 1517 he published for the benefit of the nuns and novices in his diocese a translation into English of the rule of S. Benedict. A copy of this scarce black letter book may be seen in the long room at the British Museum Library. In the preface he says: "For these causes, at the instant requeste of our ryght dere and well-beloved daughters in our Lord Jeshu, the Abbasses of the Monasteries of Rumsay, Wharwel, Seynt Maries within the citie of Winchester, and the Priorisses of Wintney, our religious diocesans, we have translated the sayde rule into our moder's tongue, comune playne rounde Englishe, easy and redy to be understande by the sayde devoute religiouse women."

In 1521, writing to Wolsey, he says that "he has endeavoured to do within his own small jurisdiction what Wolsey had resolved on in both provinces of England, but though he has given all his study to it, for nearly three years, where he had to correct and punish, he found the clergy, and particularly (what he did not at first suspect) the monks, so depraved, so licentious and corrupt, that he despaired of any perfect reformation, even in his diocese." From a letter of Lady Sandys, it would seem that the monks and nuns were almost too much for his powers, but his personal character made his visitations and injunctions carry a force beyond their real strength. In 1528 he and his chancellor would seem to have been accused of harshness, for he writes to Wolsey in defence of the action taken. "It is true," he says, "that the religious women of his diocese are forbidden to leave their monasteries, and yet so much liberty appeareth sometime too much." Had he the same authority as Wolsey he would endeavour to mure

and enclose their monasteries according to the ordinance of the law, otherwise there will be no surety for their observance of good religion. For the rest, they are as favourably dealt with as any religious women in the realm. And it may be added that the nuns of St. Mary's, Winchester, speak of him as "a principal benefactor of our monastery." The words form part of an inscription in a pontifical which the good Bishop gave them.

If Fox was severe, he had cause to be so even as early as 1507, as will be seen from the following injunctions for Romsey. And the state of things twenty years later is an even stronger justification for very stern measures indeed. Preceding the injunctions of 1507 are two entries of admonitions, one to a Mr. Folton and another to the vicar of the parish, whose name is not entered in the Register.

INJUNCTIONS MADE BY BISHOP FOX FOR ROMSEY, ON THE 3RD OF JANUARY, 1507.

2nd January, 1507.—Master John Dowman, LL.D., Vicar-General of the Bishop of Winchester, in a certain chamber within the inn at the sign of the George, at Alton, warned Master Folton, appearing before him in person, that in future he should in no way go, or send or direct letters, messenger or sign to any nun of Romesaye, under pain of excommunication.

Item, that he should not send any of his servants to the Abbey of Romsey; and if he should wish to send any messenger to Master Brian Esthorp,[1] that then the messenger shall not be one of his own servants.

5th January, [1507,] in the parish church of Romsey, Master John Dowman admonished Sir . . . . . Vicar of Romsey, appearing in person, under pain of privation, that he should in nowise enter the precinct of the Monastery, except the chapel of the Holy Rood, nor have any communication with the Abbess

[1] Receiver of the Monastery.

[R. Cattermole, c. 1814.

[R. Cattermole, c. 1814.

NORTH CHOIR AISLE AND APSE.

Broadlands Collection.

To face p. 228.]

nor with any of the nuns, in his own person, or by another, or by letters, or by deed, words, nod, or sign, or messenger, under the said penalty.

[3rd January, 1507.] Master John Dowman, Vicar-General, admonished Joyce Rows, Abbess of Romsey, and enjoined her to behave well for the future, and especially in observing her religion, in avoiding conversation of secular persons, and also in drinking and eating to enormous excess, especially at night, on pain of privation.

Item, in virtue of obedience that the Abbess, after and beyond dinner and supper, shall be sober and spare in her food and drink, and especially after compline. Item, that after dinner and supper, and especially after compline, the nuns shall not repair to the Abbess's chamber.

Item, he enjoins the Abbess on pain of privation, that no priest, except Master Brian Estthorp and Master William Edwardes, and no other seculars, especially Trustran Faurit, le Roy Kyrkeby, Christofer George Flecher, and Thomas Leicroft have access and repair to her.

Item, that evidences and jewels belonging to the Monastery, being in the keeping of the Abbess, shall be placed in the treasury, the Abbess and Master Brian Estthorp affirming them to have been and to be in the treasure.

Item, he enjoins the Abbess on pain of privation, that two doors of her chamber, one towards the hall, and the other towards the court, shall be securely closed henceforth and securely locked. The Abbess, in sign of submission in this matter, handed and delivered the keys of the said two doors to Master William Edwardys, whom the Vicar-General admonished to keep them safely.

Item, he enjoins the Abbess that neither Maud Rows, sextoness, nor any other of her nuns, shall go to her chamber after compline, nor shall she wait for (exspectabit) any of them after compline, on pain of excommunication.

Item, he enjoins Isabel Morgan, prioress, "perquireret" for one nun who has had frequent access, familiarly and suspiciously

and beyond the proper time, to the house of the bailiff or "villici agricultor(is)" of the Monastery, and all others who went with her to the said house, and to correct and reform her, but to admonish all others that they go no more henceforth to the said house.

Item, he enjoins the said Maud Rows, sextoness, in sight of the Abbess, not to go to the Abbess's chamber after compline, on pain of excommunication.

Item, he enjoins her, in presence of the Abbess and Prioress, on pain of excommunication, to better observe the order which Richard, Bishop of Winchester, limited her to, namely, in keeping the door between the parish church and the chapel of the Holy Rood, and two other doors in the wall between the chapel of the Holy Rood and the choir of the nuns, so that these two doors may never be open at the same time. The Abbess, Prioress, and Sextoness, with others, closed these doors; one of them being near the altar of the Holy Rood called "the rede dore" shall be wholly closed and locked and nailed to the wall with bolts and iron nails.

Item, he admonished Anne Hervy to observe the religion which she had professed, better in future, and to abstain from her obstinacy and from the society of priests and from contradictions and scandals, and to amend her former defects, under a penalty.

On the same day and place the Abbess, Prioress, Sub-Prioress, Sextoness, and all the other nuns concluded and provided that Joan Patent, nun, who had hurt her shin, by her consent shall in future have meals in her own chamber, and shall have daily in her chamber the right (jus) of one nun.

Item, the said Vicar-General enjoined Thomas Hampton, doorkeeper of the cloister door, on pain of excommunication, before Master Brian Estthorp, Master William Edwardes, the Abbess, the Prioress, and the Sextoness, that in future he keep securely the said door, so that no one of any rank or condition shall enter or leave by it without his leave, He shall in his own person open the said door for any person entering or leaving, and immediately shall close and lock it.

Item, he admonishes the said doorkeeper that whenever anyone not living within the precincts of the Monastery shall wish to enter by the said door, the doorkeeper, before he opens the door, shall tell the Prioress that such a person is there, and in no way permit him to enter except by her leave.

Item, he warned the Abbess and Prioress, together with the steward and Master Brian, that the door in the wall towards the cemetery shall be wholly closed and walled up, and the doors towards paradise shall be well and securely kept with all diligence.

Item, he warns the Prioress and all the nuns to observe their religion, in attending to the divine offices, by night and day, and at the due hours, and especially at midnight, in good number, *viz.*, twelve nuns at least.

Item, that they sing the divine services gradually with pauses.

Item, that by night and day at all canonical hours they go at the same time to the choir and return two and two, "cum pulchra et honesta modestia."

Item, that they exclude outsiders, and do not speak to them without leave of the Prioress.

Item, that they keep silence at the due times and places.

Item, they shall be sober, and abstain from drink after compline.

Item, they shall observe love and charity among them.

Item, whenever it shall happen that any of the nuns deviates from love and charity, or offend in any of the aforesaid, especially in those things which concern their religion and the health of their souls, they shall be reformed, corrected, and advised by the Prioress and their confessor, or either of them, as the case demands and requires.

The said vicar-general enjoins Elizabeth Rowthall and Agnes Skelyng, frateresses, to see the window of the kitchen closed and locked at the proper time, because the nuns have been used to hold communication with lay people at the said window, beyond the proper time; and he admonishes Master Brian to provide for key and lock for the said window,

He enjoined Agnes, wife of William Coke, cook of the Monastery, that she shall not be messenger or bearer of messages or "fabularum" or signs between any nun and any lay person on pain of excommunication, and as much as in her lies shall hinder communications of lay persons with the nuns at the said window.

He enjoined Thomas Leycrofte[1] on pain of excommunication that in future he shall have no access to any chamber of the Abbess or nuns, and shall not enter the cloister nor the conventual church, nor have any communication with the Abbess or any nun, nor direct nor cause to be directed (destinari) letters or messages to any of them.

On the said eighth (sic) day the said Vicar-General in the hall admonished Thomas Langton, Christofer George, Thomas Leycrofte, bailiffs, and Nicholas Newman, "villicum agricultorem," that they should behave better in their offices and with all carefulness and diligence do those things which are incumbent on their offices, on pain of removal.

He admonished William Scott, kinsman of Master William Brian Estthorp, that he should not have access to any nun nor hold communication with her at the kitchen windowe nor at any other place either in his own person or through some other person, on pain of excommunication.

On the same day, in the chapel of the Holy Rood, the said Vicar-General admonished Sir John Cantwell, chaplain of the chantry of S. Nicholas in the Monastery, and John Lewes, chaplain, celebrating in the Monastery, that they should provide themselves with other posts against the feast of Easter next, and that after that feast they should not celebrate within the Monastery.

No surprise will be felt that Joyce Rowse resigned her post some years later. This happened before 16th September, 1515, when the *Congé d'elire* was issued for a fresh election. Anne Westbroke was then elected; she was "sexteyn" or sacrist of the Abbey, and had previously —in 1502— occupied the position of "mistress of the

[1] Bailiff. His will is dated 1530.

school." The formalities were concluded by 9th October, when the royal writ put her into possession of the temporal goods of the Monastery. This lady continued ruler of the House till 1523, but there is practically no information as to the condition of the Monastery during these eight years. Feasting may be supposed to have had less temptation for one who had been mistress of the school than for one who, like Joyce Rowse, had been kitchener. Her capacity, too, for discipline may be supposed to have been greater. However this may have been, the Convent did not as yet recover from its degradation. That the office of kitchener should have been no occasion for the gratification of greedy desires may be gathered from a description of an ideal kitchener quoted by Doctor Gasquet from an old MS.:—

"He should possess a kindly disposition, and be lavish of pity for others. He should have a sparing hand in supplying his own needs, and a prodigal one where others were concerned. He must ever be a consoler of those in affliction, and a refuge to those who are sick. He should be sober and retiring, and really love the needy, that he may assist them as a father and helper. He should be the hope and aid of all in the Monastery, trying to imitate the Lord, who said: 'He who ministers to Me, let him follow Me.'"

Two matters which touch on the external relations of the Abbey are worth recording. In 1522 Romsey, in common with other religious houses, paid an annual grant for the King's personal expenses in France, for recovery of the crown. A comparison of payments by different Houses is interesting:—Shaftesbury, £1000; Wylton, £333. 6*s*. 8*d*.; Our Lady of Winchester, £200; Romsey, £133. 6*s*. 8*d*.; Warwel, £133. 6*s*. 8*d*.; Syon, £333. 6*s*. 8*d*.; Berking, £333. 6*s*. 8*d*. All these sums must be multiplied by twelve to obtain present day values.

In the same year, on 15th September, the Bishop gave

a license for celebrating Mass in the chapel or oratory of Stanbryge, on a portable altar, in the presence of the owner, Richard Lisseter, and his wife Elizabeth, and their family, and others. The license includes permission for the reservation of the Host in a standing or hanging pix, with a light continually burning before it. The latter clause runs in the original as follows:—"Necnon sacrosanctam Eucharistiam sive hostiam salutarem in pixide honesta serata stante vel pendente in eadem capella sive oratorio cum lumine continuo coram eadem hostia salutari ardente ut decet ad Dei laudem et aliorum Christi fidelium devotionem excitandam licite habere valeatis et possitis."

A study of the four lists of sisters of the years intervening between 1478 and the Suppression in 1539, are of interest. The lists will be found on pp. 236, 237. The number of nuns fully or tacitly professed did not exceed twenty-six during the period. Five ladies, who were in 1478 younger members of the Convent, survived till 1523, an eventful and troubled time; they may have been 60–70 years of age at the latter date. Agnes Harvey was Chantress in 1523, and became Sub-Prioress in 1526. To her the Vicar, Thomas Naile, in his will dated 19th of August, 1505, leaves his red cloak with a coverlet of tapestry. Hawise Haynowe was Sub-Prioress at the earlier date, with Mary Tistede as Cellaress, Clemence Maryng as Sextoness, and Alice or Agnes Skyllyng as Prioress.

These lists give some information as to the titles and number of the officers of the Abbey, that of 1502 yielding the most information. The officers mentioned are:—Abbess, Prioress, Sub-Prioress, Chantress and three Assistants, an Almoneress, Cellaress, Sextoness and four Assistants, Kitchener, two Frateresses, Infirmaress, and a Mistress of

the School.[1] There were thus eleven officers with eight assistants—nineteen in all—a large proportion out of the whole community of twenty-six sisters, but by no means too large in the earlier days when the Abbey numbered eighty to a hundred nuns; indeed there were probably more, for there is no mention of a guest mistress who must have filled a busy office when Romsey Abbey stood in all its glory.

[1] Chantress, who was the chief singer and had the care of the Library and, in male establishments, was architect to the community.

Sextoness, who cared for the fabric of the church and had charge of the plate and vestments and looked after the cemetery.

Cellaress, who was the purveyor of food stuffs, and had the care of the stores and also of the servants and looked to the general repairs of the house.

Frateress, who was over the frater or refectory and saw that all was in readiness for the meals, providing cloths and napkins.

FOUR LISTS OF NUNS DURING SIXTY YEARS, 9TH SEP., 1478, TO 28TH DEC., 1538.

NOTE.—Names marked * occur in 1478 and afterwards, and † in 1502 and after, and ‡ in 1523 and after.

9th September, 1478.

Johanna Skyllyng, Prioress.
Edburga More.
Katerina Statham.[1]
Matildis Caswyk.
Anabella Dyngley.[2]
Elizabeth Broke.[3]
*Isabella Morgan.[2]
*Cecilia Rede.[2]
*Johanna Skyllyng, jnr.[2]
*Johanna Paten.[2]
*Thomasina Asshley.[1 2]
*Editha Holewey.[2]
*Anna Rowse.[2]
*Judoca Rowse.[2]
Johanna Sutton.[2]
Johanna Serell.
*Agnes Welle.
*Johanna Stoode, *i.e.*, Strowde.[2]
[These expressly professed.]
*Maria Tisted.[2]
*Christina More.[2]
*Helena Tawke.[2]
*Hawisa Haynowe.[2]
*Agnes Skyllyng.[2]
*Agnes Harvy.[2]
*Elizabeth Routhale.[2]
[These tacitly professed.]
Margaret Taylard [absent].

[1] Mentioned in 1462. [2] Here in 1492 with Emma Conney and Alice Widenstall. [3] Resigned the office of Abbess, but re-elected.

6th June, 1502.

*Isabella or Elizabeth Morgan or Maryuleyn, Prioress.[1]
*Cecilia Reede, Sub-Prioress.[2]
*Johanna Skelyng.
*Johanna Paten,[3] Chantress.[2]
*Thomasina Asheley, Almoness.[2]
*Editha Holowey, Cellaress.
*Anna (or Maud, in 1506) Rowse, Sextoness.[2]
*Gaudeta or JoyceRowse,[4] Kitchener.
*Maria Tysted,[5] 2nd Chantress.[2]
*Elena Tawke, 3rd Chantress.[2]
*Christina Moore, 4th Chantress.[2]
*Johanna Strowde, Frateress.
*Hawicia Haynow, Sub-Sextoness.
*Agnes Skelyng, Frateress.
*Agnes Harvy,[5] Sub-Sextoness.[2]
Emma Powes,[6] Sub-Sextoness.
*Elizabeth Rowthall,[7] Sub-Sextoness
*Agnes Wellys.
†Alice Whyttunstall.[8]
†Clemencia Maryng, Infirmaress.
Mabel Harlyston.
†Johanna Kensall.
Anna Westbroke, Mistress of the School.
[These expressly professed.]
†Edith Chykkysgrove.
Johanna Wytheder.
†Elizabeth Ryprose.
[These tacitly professed.]

[1] In 1492 and 1507. [2] In 1501. [3] Infirm, 1507. [4] Abbess, 1502. [5] In 1501, wore hair long. [6] Once Prioress in house in Hereford Diocese. [7] Frateress, 1507. [8] Mentioned 1492, and in 1501 Mistress of School.

21st November, 1523.

*Agnes Skyllyng, Prioress.
*Hawise Hayne, Sub-Prioress.
*Mary Tistede, Cellaress.
*Agnes Harvy,[1] Chantress.
*Elizabeth Ruthall.
†Alice Whittynstall.
†Clemence Maryng or Malyng,[2] Sextoness.
†Jane Kemsall.
*Agnes Wellis.
†Edith Chekysgrove.
†Elizabeth Riprose.[3]
‡Edith Banester.[4]
Evelene Ynkpene.
‡Jane Clifford.
Christine Dacham.
‡Agnes Puttenham.
‡Alice Gorfyn or Gorsyn.[5]
[These expressly professed.]
Jane Faner.
‡Elizabeth Hyll.
‡Jane Wadham.
‡Anne Butteler.
‡Margaret Parkyns.
‡Margaret Dowman.[6]
[These tacitly professed.]
Anne Talke [absent].

[1] Becomes Sub-Prioress, *vice* C. Malyng deposed, 1526.
[2] Sub-Prioress in 1526, as well as Sextoness. [3] Abbess, 1523.
[4] Becomes Sextoness, *vice* Cl. M. deposed, 1526. [5] Admonished, 1526.
[6] Sentenced to imprisonment, 1526.

28th December, 1538.

†Elizabeth Ryprose, Abbess.
‡Edith Banester, Prioress.
Katherine Waddham,[1] Sub-Prioress, aged 23 in 1534.
‡Jane Waddham, Sextoness.
†Alice Whyttynstall.
Abell Howrelston.[2]
†Jane Kersall.
‡Agnes Potenhall.
‡Alys Gorphyer.
‡Jane Clyfford.
Anne Fox.
‡Elizabeth Hyll.
‡Anne Butteler.
‡Margyt Parkyns.
‡Margyt Dolman [*i.e.*, Dowman].
Jelyan More.
Bone Pownde.
Mawde Stronge.
Mary Carell,[1] aged 20 in 1534.
Elysabeth Langryshe,[1] aged 17 in 1534.
Agnes Hall,[1] aged 31 in 1354.
Maryan Goddard,[1] aged 14 in 1534.
Alys Stanle,[1] aged 15 in 1534.
Katheryn Westwode,[1] aged 14 in 1534.
Avys Edmondes,[1] aged 17 in 1534.
*Agnes Harvy.[3]

[1] Received 28th July, 1534. [2] Possibly Mabel Harlyston of 1502.
[3] The only survivor from 1478.
Elizabeth Flemyng, aged 20, admitted in 1534, but not in list of 1538.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A.D. 1523—1540.

THE SUPPRESSION.

"And when he came to Saynte Marie's aisle,
Where nonnes were wont to praie,
The vespers were songe, the shryne was gone,
And the nonnes had passyd awaie!"

Chapter XIV.

THE SUPPRESSION.

ANN Westbroke died on Saturday, 21st November, 1523, within the precincts of the house, and was buried before the high altar "as is customary," so runs the report. The Chapter met on 24th November and sent to the King their letter praying for license to elect by the hand of Master John Dowman, LL.D., Prebendary of Tymsbury, Christopher George and John Ray, literates. Master John Dowman had his usual house of residence within the parish of S. Martin, by Ludgate, London, and was represented on the election day by the President of the Chapter, Prioress Agnes Skyllyng. Christopher George was a literate of the Salisbury Diocese, and is described in 1507 as a bailiff of the Abbey, when he and others were admonished to do their duty better. The Rector and Prebendary of Edington, John Ryve, was represented at the election by the Prioress, Agnes Skyllyng, and by the Sub-Prioress, Hawise Haynowe.

The proceedings lasted till 25th January, when the temporal goods were delivered to the new Abbess, but the actual election took place on Wednesday, 16th December. The Mass for the guidance of the Holy Spirit was solemnly sung and celebrated by Master John Newman, perpetual Vicar of Romsey, "as the custom is," in the Conventual Church, the sisters being present, and then

the great bell rang to Chapter, and the Bishop's Chancellor, Master John Incent, LL.D., gave "a wholesome exhortation." The grace of the Holy Spirit was devoutly invoked by the sisters on their knees, through the singing of the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus" with its versicles, and the collect "Deus qui corda fidelium." Of the sisters who took part in the election, fifteen were expressly professed, and seven tacitly professed. The latter are described as of legal and sufficient age, *viz.*, fourteen years and above. Two sisters were absent. They used on this, the last occasion of electing an Abbess of Romsey, the least usual method, that of "acclamation," or the uncontradicted declaration of the common wish of the body, "per viam seu formam inspiracionis seu quasi viam spiritus sancti." "And then on our knees," says the President, "we gave ourselves to prayer, beseeching God that He would be pleased to enlighten and inspire our hearts to choose such an one for Abbess as would appear devoted to God, and the more fit, serviceable, and necessary to our Monastery." Then suddenly, with united voice, as by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they chose Elizabeth Ryprose for their Abbess.

Afterwards, the Te Deum Laudamus with its versicles having been sung, and the bells rung, "we caused Elizabeth Ryprose elect to be carried to the high altar of our conventual church—et eam super altare predictum prostratam poni fecimus." Psalms were sung, and the accustomed prayers were said over her by the Vicar, Master John Newman, and the Bishop's Chancellor published the election to the clergy and people assembled in a great multitude, and then and there publicly showed them the person elected. The nuns returned to the chapter house and sent two of their number with the notary and witnesses to the elect, "in domo familie sue" in the infirmary near the cloister, to urge her to accept office, but she

desired to deliberate till 2 p.m., and at last gave her consent in these words:—

"In the name of God Amen. I Elizabeth Ryprose Sister and nunne of this house of or blessid lady and saynt Ethelflede of Rumsay in the diocesse of Winchestre of Thorder of saynt Benet and to the said ordre there expressly professid lawfully elected and chosyn in Abbesse of the said house, and also to consent to the said election made of me of the behalf of the Convent of the said house by there procuratrices fyrstly secundly and instantly and moost instantly requyred, not wyllyng farthermore to resyst the wyll of God in that behalf:—In the name of Jhesu Crist and his blessid mother Mary and saynt Ethelflede in whose honor the said house and monastery is made and dedicate I expressly consent to thelection of me made in that behalf and therunto I gyve my consent to this present wrytyng."

All this was according to custom, and is described in similar terms at other elections to the office of Abbess, in Romsey Monastery. In her oath to the Bishop, Elizabeth concludes with the words, "In witenesse whereof I have made thre crossis wt my hand the yere of or Lord God a thousand fyve hundreth and twenty thre" (*i.e.*, 1524). The Bishop's letter of confirmation is dated 16th January, 1524, and the temporalities were restored by the Crown on 25th January.

Elizabeth Ryprose had joined the nunnery more than twenty years before this date, she would therefore have been at least thirty-five or forty years old, and may have been more; she is not definitely mentioned as having held any lesser office before she became Abbess. There are indications that she was a capable woman, and did her best to discharge the duties of her office faithfully under a variety of circumstances of a most anxious character. Injunctions were issued at once by the Bishop's Chancellor, and Anne Talke, who was absent at the election, received correction at his hands, but the nature of her offences is not mentioned.

EXTRACT FROM BISHOP FOX'S REGISTER.

Injunctions made by Master John Incent, LL.D., etc., sitting judicially in the Monastery of Romsey, 1523, in the chapter-house.

1.—The nuns are to keep silence in the church, cloister, frater, and dormitory.

2.—They shall abstain from conversing with secular persons, not only in the said places, but also in all other parts of the Monastery, except with friends and kinsfolk, with whom they shall hold communication by leave of the Abbess in the Abbess's great chamber.

3.—They shall keep their foreheads covered to the middle with their veils, and uniformly walk in measured pace with their habits.

At the same day and place appeared Anne Talke, nun of the said Monastery, and prostrated herself before the said John Incent, and submitted to his correction and to penance for her offences. Penance, that she go to prison for the next month, and fast every Saturday (singulis sextis feriis), and take bread and water only; and after she comes out she shall not use "suis ligis vocatis bendis," nor linen cloth under her chin, and shall take a lower place in the Convent until she shall be dispensed.

The King had proposed to pay a visit to Romsey sometime during 1526; the reason for his visit does not appear, but he did not carry out his purpose for a very good cause, which Lord Sandys explains in a letter to Wolsey, dated from Arundel, 6th August. "The King," he says, "will be at Winchester on the eve of the Assumption (14th August), and will spend there the time he intended to be at Romsey, where the sickness is." The sickness spoken of here was the plague. From another letter it appears that Bishop Fox entertained the King at Winchester. "The latter was merry and in good health," writes Fitz-William to Wolsey, "and had had great cheer with my

CONVENT SEAL (probably of late date).

[The Annunciation.]

To face p. 244.]

Lord Arundel, Lord Delaware, Lord Lisle, and now with my Lord of Winchester."

Bishop Fox, in the latter years of his life, betook himself to his diocese, lamenting his past neglect of his pastoral charges, and leaving the Court affairs to Wolsey. He became blind about 1521, and in 1522 writes to Wolsey of his neglect of his diocese for thirty years, and also of his four cathedral churches:—"he had never seen Exeter or Wells, nor innumerable souls whereof I never see the bodies." Yet it is impossible to think of Bishop Fox except as a great and good man, and one who desired to do what lay in his power to reform and assist the Monasteries. About six months after the King's proposed visit, and early in the year 1527, Romsey was again taken in hand, possibly at the Abbess's instigation, who must have had a time of severe trial by reason of the ill-doings of several sisters. In the face of the several visitations of Romsey Abbey during Bishop Fox's episcopate, it cannot be said that no efforts were made to reform the house ere the storm fell upon the Monasteries. The account of this visitation reveals a lamentable state of things in the case of several of the sisters, and closes with the saddest event that stains the pages of the Abbey's history.

EXTRACT FROM BISHOP FOX'S REGISTER.

"On 16th January, 1527, in the chapter-house of the Monastery of Romsey, before the vicar-general, sitting judicially, Lady Alice Gorsyn appeared, and confessed that she had used bad language with her sisters, and spread abroad reproachful and defamatory words of them. He absolved her from the sentence of excommunication, and enjoined on her in penance, that if she used bad language in the future, and spread about defamatory words of them,

a red tongue made of cloth should be used (in sua barba alba) on the barbe under the chin, and remain there for a month." This was to be repeated if she were again in fault, and the Abbess was to carry out this injunction in virtue of holy obedience.

On the same day, the said vicar-general by the bishop's command removed lady *Clemence Malyn* from the offices of sub-prioress and sextoness, on account of her negligence and carelessness in her offices, as she had been removed by the Abbess—and by authority and command of the Bishop and consent of the Abbess he appointed lady *Agnes Harvy*, sub-prioress, and lady *Edith Banester*, sextoness, and warned them in virtue of holy obedience to faithfully execute the same offices as they wished to answer for the same.

On the same day, lady *Clemence Malyn*, sworn to answer faithfully in articles concerning her soul's health, and examined by the said vicar-general, says that on a certain night which she cannot recall, shortly before Christmas, the Abbess with the receiver, came to her about the seventh hour, and asked for a thief who was in the church; she denied that anyone was in the church, and the next day, again questioned by the Abbess, she confessed that "dominus" Richard Johans was in the church in an aisle before the altar of the Rood, about 7 o'clock at night.

Questioned by the said vicar-general, she confessed that she had often publicly held communication with the said Richard Johans in the church, the keepers of the church being present in the church, before the aisle of the Rood and in other places in the church, and sometimes other sisters being present; nevertheless she denied that she had ever done wrong with him, and says moreover that she often brought drink to him in the sacristy, but she did not drink with him, and to other things she answers in the negative—the vicar-general waits to give sentence until he consults with the bishop. Afterwards, asked, she confesses that she left the key of the door of "paradise" in a hole near the door, by which key the said Richard often entered the church.

At the same time and place Margaret Dowman confessed to misconduct with one Thomas Hordes, and penance was enjoined on her; she was not to use any linen upon her outer garments; she was not to use the ring of her profession, which she had violated; and if she carried a candle in procession she was to do so point downwards, and therefore doubtless unlit. She was to remain in prison for a year, and to abstain from intercourse and conversation with her sisters for that period, with the exception of the sister who had charge of her. During this time she was to fast on bread and water and abstain from other foods and drinks each third and sixth day for the year, and on those days she was to receive discipline in the chapter-house.

Amongst the miscellaneous charters in Lambeth Library there is a Bull giving Papal protection to the Convent. It is endorsed with the statement that it was shown by John Foster on behalf of the Abbess and Convent on 7th June, 1527. This endorsement suggests that there was some action at this time brought in the Court of Arches or elsewhere about the lands or titles of the Abbey, and that the Bull was produced in court as evidence. The Bull was originally issued by a Pope Gregory in his tenth year. There are only two Popes of this name who held the Papal see for so long a period, Gregory VII (1073–1085) and Gregory IX (1227–1241), and the protection would therefore seem to be of early date.

Bishop Fox was buried 5th October, 1528, and Wolsey, who succeeded him, died in 1530. There are no entries in his register relating to Romsey. It is not a little remarkable that a Thomas Wolsey Canonicus should have been ordained deacon in Romsey Abbey during Bishop Waynflete's episcopate, on 7th April, 1480, by the Bishop of Sidon, but as the great Cardinal was only born in

1471, it could not have been he who received holy orders in 1480.

Bishop Gardiner's register contains no Romsey entries till 1534, and there is no evidence, therefore, to show how the Abbey fared during these six years, or how Bishop Fox's discipline affected the lives of the sisters. This was the year in which the Act of Supremacy was passed declaring Henry supreme Head of the Church of England, and in which the Nun of Kent, Elizabeth Barton, was executed for treason, and the time of terror had therefore begun. In the next year Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher were executed, and Thomas Cromwell was made vicar-general in matters ecclesiastical. He began enquiries into the condition of the monasteries.

On 28th July, 1534, the Reverend Father John, Suffragan of Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, received the profession of nine nuns. The names and ages are given, and it may be noticed that two were but fourteen years old, which seems young for making full profession. The ladies were Elizabeth Langriche, seventeen ; Katherine Woodham (Wadham), twenty-three ; Marion Goddard, fourteen; Maria Carell, twenty ; Elizabeth Fleming, twenty; Katherine Westwood, fourteen ; Alice Stanley, fifteen ; Agnes Hall, thirty-one ; and Alice Edmonde, seventeen. All these ladies remained in the Convent till the suppression, with the exception of Elizabeth Fleming, whose name does not appear in the list of 1538.

There are two letters written by Elizabeth Ryprose to Cromwell this year, 1534, the one in November, in which she complains that a man to whom she granted a lease, *according to the King's letter to her*, has only paid twenty marks of the fine which he promised to pay, but at Cromwell's order will give up the twenty nobles which are yet unpaid. The other is dated 15th December, and in it

she says, "I have received your letters, and am sorry I cannot fulfil your request, for my grant is passed under my seal for the term of my life, as is known to Master Stafferton."

In the absence of Cromwell's letters to the Abbess, it is impossible to judge exactly what was going forward, but these letters seem to show that pressure was being brought to bear upon the Convent to make appointments *according to the will of the Crown*, and it may be that the Fosters were appointed receivers in the February following under Cromwell's directions. One of these Fosters was a notable person during the last days of the monastery, and the particulars of his appointment will be worth recording.

On the 20th February, 1535, the Abbess, Elizabeth Ryprose, appointed Thomas Foster and his son, Master John Foster, receivers of the Abbey in succession to Thomas Thomson, clerk, and Master Richard Pashide. The stipend was £5 (*i.e.*, £60), and 16*s.* 8*d.* for livery, and for the livery of two servants 20*s.* Rooms for the receivers were appointed in the left part or south side of the gate within the Abbey, together with fuel and daily meat and drink. Stabling and provision was also supplied for three horses. It was John Foster who became notable by playing the part of the evil genius of the Abbey in the work of the suppression; to him probably is due the destruction of the Abbey's rolls and MSS., and the unhappy Abbess must have bitterly rued the day when she appointed these men her receivers.

The suppression of the monasteries was now at hand. In the July of 1535, Dr. Legh wrote to Cromwell offering his services as a visitor, and recommending Richard Layton as his co-adjutor. The first visitation began in October and lasted only six months, and the Act for suppressing the monasteries with an income under £200 was passed

February, 1536. The Court of Augmentation of the King's revenue was set up and commissioners were appointed to carry out the suppression of these lesser monasteries. Abbess Elizabeth Shelley of St. Mary's, Winchester, saved her monastery by a payment of £333. 6*s*. 8*d*., but the reprieve was but a short one. In October of this year (1536), the rebellion in the north known as "the Pilgrimage of Grace" broke out, the commissioners were violently attacked, and some monasteries were reinstated by the insurgents. But by the autumn of 1537, the Crown had regained control of the country, and the visitations were continued and extended over the whole of 1538 and 1539. The larger monasteries were bribed or threatened into making surrender, indeed, it is said that few remained by the close of the year 1538. An instance of how matters were managed when a religious house was obstinate is seen in the case of Amesbury. The Abbess Florence Bannerman, who held out faithful to her trust, was deposed on 15th December, 1539, and a pliable successor, Joan Darrell, was appointed, who at once surrendered to the Royal pleasure. Houses which surrendered obtained an advantage, the abbess or prioress and her sisters receiving pensions. For instance, Elizabeth Shelley, of S. Mary's, Winchester, obtained a pension of £26. The Abbess of Wherwell obtained £40, and her sisters from £3. 6*s*. 8*d*. to £6 each. The pliant Joan Darrell of Amesbury received £100, and the Head of the wealthy Abbey of Shaftesbury £133.

The course of events at Romsey is not very clear. Sir Richard Lyster of Stanbridge writes to Cromwell on 15th September, 1538: "The Monastery of Romsey, hearing they are in danger of suppression, are making leases and alienating their goods. He desires to know whether he should stay them in this." There have survived a number

of deeds dated within a week of Sir Richard Lyster's letter, *viz.*, 20th September, making grants to a variety of persons. Christopher Shorte is made wodeward of the woods within the parish of Romsey, and he and his wife, the handmaiden of the Lady (the Abbess), obtain a pension of 66*s.* 8*d.*, with a clause of distraint in case of nonpayment. These people were doubtless faithful servants of the Abbess, who would seem to have been kindly, if not wise, in her generation. On the same day Henry Warner and Thomas Webbe were appointed to the offices of bailiff and collector of rents, formerly held by Christopher George and John Ray. This may have been simply an appointment in the ordinary course of things. It is difficult to say the same of the next two gifts. Francis Strowde receives an annual rent of 40*s.*, with a clause of distraint, and Nicholas Wadham, generosus, obtains an annuity of £7 under like conditions. The latter grant has a special significance when it is recollected that this gentleman had two daughters in the Abbey, Katherine Wadham, who only became professed in 1534, and was now sub-prioress, and Jane, who was here in 1523, and now held the office of sextoness or sacristan. A third lady, Elizabeth Hill, was probably a kinswoman, Sir Nicholas having married as his first wife Joan, daughter of Robert Hill, of Antony. The mother of the other two ladies was Margaret, daughter of Sir John Seymour, of Wolfall, Wilts, and sister to Queen Jane Seymour and Sir Thomas Seymour. Sir Nicholas is described as of Merfield in Somerset, and Governor of the Isle of Wight. His lady's tomb may be seen in the church of S. Mary's Priory, Carisbrooke.

The connection of the Wadhams with the Court may have led the authorities to hope that the Monastery would be easily and quietly surrendered. One of the receivers, John Foster, who may very possibly be identified with

John Foster appointed on 1st September, 1536, to the chaplaincies of S. Andrew within the Infirmary and of S. Peter within the Abbey, writes a long letter to Sir Thomas Seymour, 28th December, 1538:—

"In my most harty wise, Right Worshipful Syr., I recommend me unto you, and according to your request I doo herein signify and subscribe unto you the state of the House of Romesey, the Rents of Assize, and where they do lie, and the riches of the same.

"First you shall understand that the House is outt of dette, also the plate and jewels is worth ccc*li.* and better, VI belles be worth c*li.* at the lest, also the Chyrche is a great sumptuus Thynge all of freestone and covered with lede which as I esteme it is worth iij or iiijc*li.* or rather myche better."

He here gives a list of the manors and lordships belonging to the convent, amounting to about £481. 1*s.* 8*d.* annually.

Rents of the Abbey of Romsey:—

		£	*s*	*d*
Lordship of	Ry, yearly value	235	0	0
	Ichynstoke	28	9	0¾
	Sydmanton	30	12	0
	Tyleshade	11	6	8
	Dorset, Pewdell	2	0	0
	Gloucester, Hownelacy ...	6	13	4
	Wilts, Asheton, Edyngton ...	167	0	7¼
		£481	1	8

He continues:—

"And when you wrote unto me by Mr. Flemynge, that I should acerten you, whether I thought the Abbas wt. the rest of the Nunys wolde be content to surrender up their house, the truthe is I doo percyve throwght the mocyon that yr. kinswomen and others yr. fryndes made for you the wil be content at all tymes to doo you any pleasure they may, but I perceyve they wolde be loth to trust to the commyssioners gentylnes ffor they heresay that other houses have been straytely handeled, and this fare you harteley well at Romesey the xxviiith day of December. John Foster, Rec."

Then follow the names of the Abbess Elizabeth Ryprose and twenty-five nuns.

Names of the Convent of Romsey:—

Elizabeth Ryperose, Abbess.	Margyt Parkyns.
Edith Banester, Prioress.	Margyt Dolman.
Katherine Waddham, Sub-Prss.	Jelyan More.
Jane Waddham, Sextoness.	Bowne Pownde.
Alys Whythynstall.	Mawde Stronge.
Abell Howrelston.	Mary Carell.
Jane Kersall.	Elysabeth Langryshe.
Agnes Pottenhall.	Agnes Hall.
Alys Gorphyer.	Maryan Goddard.
Jane Clyfford.	Alys Stanle.
Anne Fox.	Katheryn Westwode.
Eliz. Hyll.	Avys Edmondes.
Anne Butteler.	Agnes Harvy.

The letter seems to disclose a willingness on the part of the Convent to listen to terms. The visitor, Richard Layton, in a letter to Cromwell written this year, speaks of his departure towards Romsey. His letter bears no exact date, but the tone of Foster's letter of 28th December, 1538, implies that the Abbey had not then been visited; if so, Layton's visit followed during the next three months, the year 1538 ending, according to the old reckoning, on 25th March of the year following. No account has survived as to the visitor's proceedings, nor as to the last days and suppression of the Abbey. It is, however, significant that in the deed of 1544 by which the Crown made over the great church to the townsfolk the following passage occurs: "All and every of which premises (*i.e.*, the church and ground surrounding it for twenty-four feet) came down to our hands by reason or pretext of a certain paper gift, concession and confirmation by the late Abbess and Convent of the said late Monastery to us (*i.e.*, the King), our heirs, and successors, thence made and given up, *or by reason of the dissolution of the same late Monastery.*" This passage might seem to declare the voluntary surrender of

the Convent, but the last phrase, and the absence of pensions as noticed above, points rather to a forcible suppression.

About a year and a half after Foster's letter, Romsey is included in a list of houses voluntarily surrendered, in Court, *with certain suppressed* by Act of Parliament. These houses were Beaulieu, Southwick, Hide, Romsey, S. Swithun's, and S. Mary's, Winchester, Titchefeld, Wherwell, etc. (29th September, 1540). Here is nothing definite; more significant is a license issued in January, 1539, to the Abbess and Convent to alienate the lordship or manors of Edington and Steeple Ashton, etc., to Sir Thomas Seymour. This license to the Convent seems to imply weakness on the part of the Abbess; perhaps she hoped by casting one great member of the estate to the wolves to buy off the rest. If so, she was mistaken. The Abbey was suppressed, but there seems to have been no unworthy surrender for private gain on the part of the Abbess. Elizabeth Ryprose and her sisters had no pensions, as they would have had if a voluntary surrender had been agreed to.

The members of a suppressed monastery were much to be pitied, and the more so if they were of devout mind and believed conscientiously in their vows. Friends and relations might be found to give them a home, but a hearty welcome would be more than doubtful; and in some cases they must have been driven to seek a livelihood in a world to which they were not accustomed. If a devout sister obtained an independence, the life in a regulated society was no longer open to her, and if she did her best to fulfil her vows, it can have been only accomplished in a modified form. Possibly in some cases the head of a disbanded monastery kept some of her sisters with her, in a quasi community life. The case of Abbess Elizabeth Shelley, of the Nunna Minster, Winchester, is worthy of notice. At

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her death she left 20*s.* to each of seven nuns, who seem to have been her companions.

The after-life of the Romsey sisters is unknown, with one exception. Jane Wadham, the daughter of Sir Nicholas mentioned above, obtained "capacity," as it was called, to return to the world. Her story is a strange one, and may best be told in the words of an old document:—

COMMISSION RELATING TO JANE WADHAM.

11th June, 1541.—Commission to Cuthbert Bp. of Durham, Nicholas Bp. of Rochester, Thomas Bp. of Westminster, ... Horwood Attorney General and William Petre LL.D. to enquire concerning the petition of Jane Wadham alias Foster, who states that after arriving at years of discretion she was forced by threats and machinations of malevolent persons to become a regular nun in the house of nuns at Rumsey, but, having both in public and in private always protested against this seclusion, she conceived herself free from regular observance, and in that persuasion joined herself in matrimony with one John Foster "per verba de presenti," intending to have the marriage solemnized as soon as she was free from her "religion," and afterwards the same parties who had compelled her to become a nun induced the said John by their threats to become a priest; which notwithstanding as soon as the said Jane was released from her vows, the marriage was solemnized in facie ecclesiæ and they lived together for sometime as man and wife, till certain malevolent persons aspersed their marriage as contrary to laws divine and human and caused her husband to deny his marital obligations. The commissioners are authorized to pronounce the marriage valid, if they shall so find it.

The husband of this lady was without a doubt the same John Foster who was a receiver of rents for the Abbey, and the writer of the letter to Sir Thomas Seymour about the negotiations as to the surrender.

He rented property at Baddesley, formerly belonging to the Knights Hospitallers, and lived there, and undoubtedly benefited in the scramble for the Abbey's lands. He continued to occupy "the farm of a messuage with garden, dovecot, land, and pasture, in Romsey aforesaid, which Nicholas Wethers, chaplain, lately occupied as parcel of the chantry of the late Nicholas Braffeld; to this was attached an annuity of £7. 12*s*." John Foster had been appointed to this office that he might celebrate divine service for the souls of Nicholas Braffeld and his wife within the parish church of Romsey for life; and the emoluments were confirmed to him by the Court of Augmentation after the suppression, though the duties may very possibly have fallen into abeyance.

He and his father, Thomas Foster, continued to receive stipends as stewards. To the latter the Court of Augmentation confirmed a lease for ninety-nine years made by the Abbess and Convent on the eve of the suppression, 10th July, 1538. The farm included various parcels of land, including Brodelande, Smalmede, Prestland, Stywardeslande, Peryton, Shortesdydche, Langelande, eighty acres in Northgaston, Pastyry, Bycroft, Hille Feldes, Wodlee, Inslnesborough, Oxlease, Northynmore, and all other parcels of land within the parish of Romsey, with all coppice wood or timber growing within the said parcels of land, and common of pasture in the common pastures of the Monastery, with sheep, horses, and other animals, and in the said wood with pigs. The rent was £10, perhaps in modern money £120 a year.

In spite of "malevolent persons," and the trouble they had at first to obtain recognition of their marriage, John Foster and his wife must have settled down quietly. He appears as the incumbent of Baddesley at the ecclesiastical visitation of 1543, together with Sir Robert, his curate,

and two laymen, William Cassett and another. Their family consisted of three children, Edward, Andrew, and Jane. Andrew married Barbara Abarrow, by whom he had a daughter Mary, who married an Edward Abarrow, and another daughter Audrey, who married Sir William Abarrow of North Charford, Southampton. Andrew Foster seems to have been extravagant and to have sold the property, and in Marsh's little book on Baddesley some rude lines, current in the neighbourhood, are quoted from an MS. written by Richard Morley of Hursley before 1668. They run as follows, and the "rudeness" is explained of his extravagance in selling the estate, a rough wasteful fellow one must suppose:—

> "Mr. Foster of Baddesley was a good man
> Before the marriage of priests began,
> For he was the first that married a nun,
> For which he begat a very rude son."

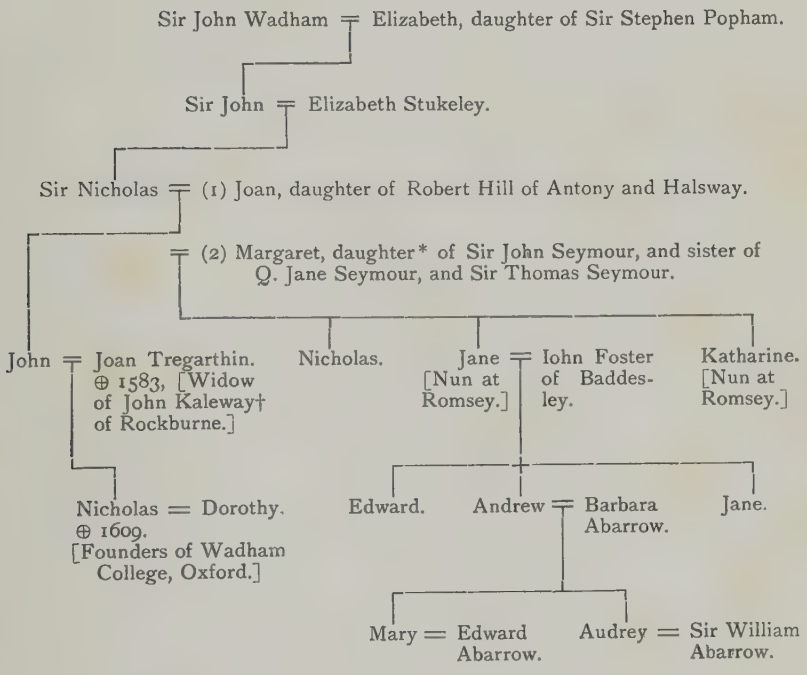
Mr. Foster appears to have been still living in 1556–7.

The fortunes of the Abbey estate immediately after the Suppression and some notes on tenants and owners will be given in the next chapter. It is impossible to close this chapter without some words of reflection on the history of the great Abbey. The House in the early days had been great by reason of its piety, great, too, as an establishment in which education was highly prized, great also in its wealth and influence and by reason of its members, who were often of noble birth and sometimes of royal descent; but it had fallen, and fallen not only as with many other houses, by reason of social changes, but also deservedly by reason of the moral obliquity of its members. Dr. Gasquet says that out of thirteen counties the Commissioners Layton and Legh found only twenty-seven nuns, in all, charged with vice and even of these all but ten received pensions. Romsey, it must be confessed, was one of the

houses which could have given some colour to the charges of bad living which were so freely and, broadly speaking, so unjustly fastened upon religious houses. It would be a grave error for anyone to rise up from reading of Romsey's fall and conclude that the whole system was bad. No doubt there were too many religious houses in England, and the number required diminishing; no doubt a good deal of reform and revival was needed; no doubt in some cases the funds might well have been diverted to other religious and educational objects. But the wholesale sweeping away of the monastic establishments was both a crime and an error, and especially in the case of establishments for women. The education of young women, the opportunities for a distinct sphere of work in life for unmarried women, the definite life of self-dedication to Christ's service, with its power of continual intercession and witness, were swept away at one stroke.

The dissolution of 1100 religious houses for monks and nuns, and the absorption of £140,745. 6*s*. 2*d*. (or possibly £2,800,000 modern value) cannot be viewed by any impartial mind otherwise than with feelings of astonishment and shame. Nor was this all, men and, to a greater degree, women, many of them devoted to their religious profession, and innocent of crime, were subjected to sufferings of all kinds, by being suddenly cast upon the world. For many, both immediately before and directly after the Suppression, the times must have appeared dark indeed. So Romsey Monastery passed away; happily for succeeding generations the great and beautiful church was rescued by the townsfolk as is described in a deed which now hangs in the south vestry.

PEDIGREES OF WADHAM AND FOSTER.


Sir John Wadham = Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Stephen Popham.
Sir John = Elizabeth Stukeley.
Sir Nicholas = (1) Joan, daughter of Robert Hill of Antony and Halsway.
= (2) Margaret, daughter* of Sir John Seymour, and sister of Q. Jane Seymour, and Sir Thomas Seymour.
John = Joan Tregarthin. ⊕ 1583, [Widow of John Kaleway† of Rockburne.]
Nicholas.
Jane = Iohn Foster of Baddesley. [Nun at Romsey.]
Katharine. [Nun at Romsey.]
Nicholas = Dorothy. ⊕ 1609. [Founders of Wadham College, Oxford.]
Edward.
Andrew = Barbara Abarrow.
Jane.
Mary = Edward Abarrow.
Audrey = Sir William Abarrow.

* B.M. Harl. MS. 1385, p. 33, says "sister of Sir John S.," but this appears to be a mistake.

† Inherited Rockburne from the "de Romeseyes" through the Binghams.

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CHAPTER XV.

"AFTERWARDS."

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

TENNYSON, *Morte d'Arthur.*

Chapter XV.

"AFTERWARDS."

AFTER the suppression of a monastery, the conventual buildings were, as a rule, demolished or greatly modified. At Romsey some of the buildings were retained for the use of the tenants of the farms into which the property was divided. It would be a matter of no slight interest to reconstruct the plan of the Abbey buildings as they stood on the eve of the suppression; this, however, cannot be accurately done without some extended excavations, which have not at present been undertaken. If, however, the plan of a Benedictine house be borne in mind, and some notes about the Romsey Convent, found in contemporary documents, be gathered together, a general view of the buildings may be arrived at.

The cloister lay to the south side of the great church; the corbels which supported the side of the cloister roof, abutting on the south aisle, are still visible. On the opposite and south side of the cloister, traces of the frater might be looked for; and here, in one of the present dwelling-houses, the walls are of such a thickness as to leave no doubt that they formed part of the original building, perhaps the undercroft or cellars of the frater. The kitchen would have been close by, and probably to the south of the frater. The kitchen window looked into the outer court of the monastery, and in the days of slack discipline became

the means of communication between some of the sisters and idle acquaintances.

To the west of the frater the Abbess seems to have had her separate apartments. The Abbess's lodging is said, in Bishop Waynflete's Register, to have had one door towards the court (*i.e.*, the Curia, or outer court), and one towards the hall (*i.e.*, the guest hall), which latter may therefore have stood on the west side of the cloister. The Abbess's lodging is also spoken of as having an upstairs and inner chamber between an upstairs oratory or chapel and the great upstairs chamber of the Abbess. After the suppression, a reference is made by the King's Bailiff, in his account roll, to "Chabbey's lodging," meaning "the Abbess's lodging." This is the description :—

"Farm of the site of the late Abbey with a dwelling-house called Chabbey's lodginge, containing 51 feet in length (between a hall called the Householde Halle[1]) from the west end of the same to the chapel of S. Peter at the East end of the said house, together with the said chapel, a kitchen, granary, stable, and a new barn in a court called the 'utter courte of the monastery.'"

From this reference to the Abbess's lodging, it may be assumed that her separate apartments stood to the west of the frater, and the chief rooms would seem to have been upstairs. The upstairs chapel may then perhaps be identified with the Chapel of S. Peter. There are several references to the Abbess's private oratory in the Episcopal Registers.

The usual site of the Chapter House was to the east of the cloister, and parallel with the south transept of the Church. The nuns' dorter or dormitory probably stood on this side of the cloister and at right angles to the frater.

Beyond the east side of the cloister there was a garden, the wall of which reached to within some yards of the

[1] This is crossed out in the original document.

outer gateway into the market place. Just beyond the eastern wall of this garden, and between it and the gate, and perhaps standing back some sixty feet, with an alley twenty-six feet wide approaching it, stood the Clerk's or Chaplain's house, and to the rear of this and possibly extending to the Lady Chapel, was the Paradise, with a stream of water flowing through it. This stream is now covered in, and runs at the back of the houses facing the Market Place. The King's Bailiff says :—

"A tenement commonly called the 'Clerkes Chamber,' with all chambers, houses, and buildings between the said tenement and the stone wall of the outer gate of the monastery, and a parcel of the said outer court, containing 60 ft. in length from the end of the said stone wall to the end of the wall of the garden called 'Chabbes Garden,' and 26 feet in breadth, and a parcel of land at the end of the said tenement called 'Paradise,' containing . . . . in length from the said tenement to the water course in the parcel called Paradise, including a part of the same water."

Over the gateway there were chambers, and annexed to the gate was a tenement called the "Receyvours lodginge," for the use of the officer who received the rents of the Abbey, or in other words, the Steward of the Monastery.

There must have been a general scramble for the site and lands of the Abbey, which were either sold or let on lease. A part of the site, together with Tappesham and other meadows, was let to Francis Flemmynge, Esq.; the Clerke's Chamber to Peter Westbroke, Esq., one of the under-stewards, and possibly a kinsman of the Abbess Anne Westbroke. The gatehouse was leased to John Richards. Significant notes are made against several of the properties, thus:—"The said demesne lands for Richard Lister, Kt." This is the case with Brodelande, Smalmede, Prestland, Stywardesland, Peryton, Shortesdych, Lange-

lande, eighty acres in Northgaston, Pastyry, Bycroft, Hill Feldes, Wodlee, Inslnesborough, Oxlease, and Northynmore. A similar note is found against Luzborough, and also against the gatehouse, and with reference to the Manor of More Abbot and More Malwyn, then leased to Richard Dowce.

A reference has already been made to Sir Richard Lister as living at Stanbridge in 1522, and as the writer of a letter to Cromwell on 15th Sep., 1538, warning him that the Abbess and Convent were alienating their property. He was made Solicitor General, 1522—1526, and Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1530. He is spoken of as residing at Southampton in 1545, and he is described as Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1546. He was buried at S. Michael's, Southampton, 17th March, 1554, having died on the 14th March. An old MS. of 1719 thus describes his tomb :—

"In the aforesaid dormitory (*i.e.*, sleeping place of the departed) against the south part lyes on a handsome stone tomb, the figure of a judge on his back, dressed in scarlet, a collar of S.S. round his breast, a judge's cap on his head, and a book in his right hand. On a sort of cornice supported by three pillars, there is this remnant of an inscription :—

'Et dicto Elizabeth hoc in viduetate
sua curavit, 18 die Marcie, 1567.'"

It is said that the Manor of Romsey Extra continued whole in the King's hands till July, 1558, except the part in Wiltshire granted to Sir Thomas Seymour. A grant in fee for £900, however, was made to Messrs. Foster and Marden, 17th December, 1544. It included lands in Wellow and Romsey, which had been in the tenure of Sir Richard Lyster, Chief Baron of the Exchequer. The Manor of Romsey Extra included the profit of two annual fairs and a very long list of messuages is appended. The site of the Monastery (*i.e.*, Romsey Infra) was granted to

Messrs. Bellowe and Biggot, by letters patent dated 28th January, 1547, and these gentlemen made a grant to Sir Francis Flemynge.

Amongst the records of the Duchy of Lancaster of the year 1607, there occur the depositions of a number of witnesses with reference to Sir Francis Fleming's rights in the two manors of Romsey Infra and Extra. They say that he had the Infra manor by inheritance, and that the Extra manor was granted to him by letters patent in the time of Philip and Mary; this was on the 18th July, 1558. One witness had heard that the grant was for forty years, for which he paid £40 a year, apparently a lease; but his son William, who had lately died [in 1606], seems to have continued the holding. Much of the evidence relates to some woods near Rownhams, and as the account of the boundaries preserves several local names, some notes are worth inserting :—

(1.) "From Roonam's gate, leading westwards to a gutter which goeth downe to three laakes, and from these three laakes leading northwards through the woods to Julian's well, and from Julian's well to Maggett's Corner."

(2.) "Maggett's Corner and a lake running between Holborne wood and Coome wood–Julian's well. Two lakes, the one of the south and the other of the north, which meeting, divide the woods called Holborne wood from Coome wood; Coome wood being on the east and Holborne on the west."

(3.) "Austrey wood, bounded on the west by Lee Greene and on the north by Bell's meade, and so upwards to the highway leading between Hampton and Romsey, which highway is bounded by Austrey and Holborne woods. Austrey wood bounded upon a peece of ground of Mr. Paulett's and another called White, upon the south side. The highway from Hampton to Romsey bounds Holborne wood on the east side, and on the south to Mr. Mills' land, and so upwards to a piece of arable land, part whereof is the Dean of Windsor's and part Mr. Richard Mills', and so

leading to a hedge almost to Rownams gate, and so leading to three gutters or springs, and from them northwards to Julian's well and so to Maggett's Corner, and from there downe a highway to Austrey Crosse."

(4.) Mention is made of Border Crosse, White Corner, Hartegreen and Lingedon Hill.

(5.) The witnesses say that they know of trees being cut for wood and fuel used for making and repairing the beacon called Totehill Beacon. This hill is the high point of the neighbourhood, having ancient entrenchments adjoining; it is marked "Telegraph" in the older maps, and no doubt served for a signal station for a great number of years.

There are a number of other grants quoted by Mr. Latham, or to be found in the books of the Court of Augmentations in the Public Record Office. These grants would be of value in tracing out the descent of properties, whenever a sketch of the later history of Romsey is written.

The King presented John Mason to the Prebend of Tymesbury on the 28th May, 1540; this he resigned on the 7th April, 1546. In 1541 Sir Roger Taylor was Curate of Tymesbury, having his stipend from William Mody. This Prebend was apparently shorn of its titles and perhaps of its revenues, for formerly it was called the Prebend of S. Laurence the Greater, having Tymesbury and Imber attached to it. This year, in May, 1541, the Rectory was granted to the Dean and Chapter of "the royal college of the Holy Trinity, Winchester," and according to Mr. Latham they granted the Parsonage (*i.e.*, Rectory) to Sir Francis Flemynge, 17th November, 1542. The Dean and Chapter do not seem to have obtained the patronage of the Vicarage at once. The old Vicar, John Newman, who lived all through the troublous times, was ill in 1543, but he lived on till 1547, when Walter Morys was appointed Vicar on 16th March. The patron on this occasion, and for this turn only, being Richard Wynslade,

to whom this privilege was deputed by the late Receiver of the Abbey, Thomas Foster, in virtue of an advowson made to him by the late Abbess and Convent, then patrons. On 6th September, 1558, the Dean and Chapter appointed Thomas Chester as Vicar, and thus exercised their right of patronage, which they continued to do till the time of Bishop Thorold, when by an exchange Romsey Vicarage came into the hands of the Bishop.

In 1541 John Payne is described as Curate of Romsey, having his stipend from Master John Newman, Vicar. At the same time some clerical office was filled by Sir Nicholas Withers, having his stipend from Elinora Segwyke,[1] widow. This Nicholas Withers had been chaplain of the chantry of Nicholas Braffeld, occupying a messuage with garden, dovecot, land and pasture attached to this chantry.

Besides Sir John Payne and Sir Nicholas Withers there were two other clerics at Romsey who presented themselves at the ecclesiastical Visitation of 1543, viz., Sir Thomas Bardolf and Sir William Tomys. In addition to the clergy there were present eleven laymen, described as Jurati :—*John Hancocke*, Robert Rolff,[2] Christopher Short, *Simon Clerk*, Walter Carter,[3] William Newman, Walter Bayly, William Purfyshe, Robert Burnham,[4] William Blowes,[5] and William Sandley. John Hancocke died about the end of 1549, leaving a house in Chervill Street which he had lately bought of William Burnett, merchant, of Southampton. Simon Clerke lived on till 1557 ; an account of his will may be deferred to a later page.

A very important event took place on 20th February, 1544, for which the town of Romsey cannot be too grateful; so important, indeed, was the transaction effected on that day, that its anniversary might very properly be kept.

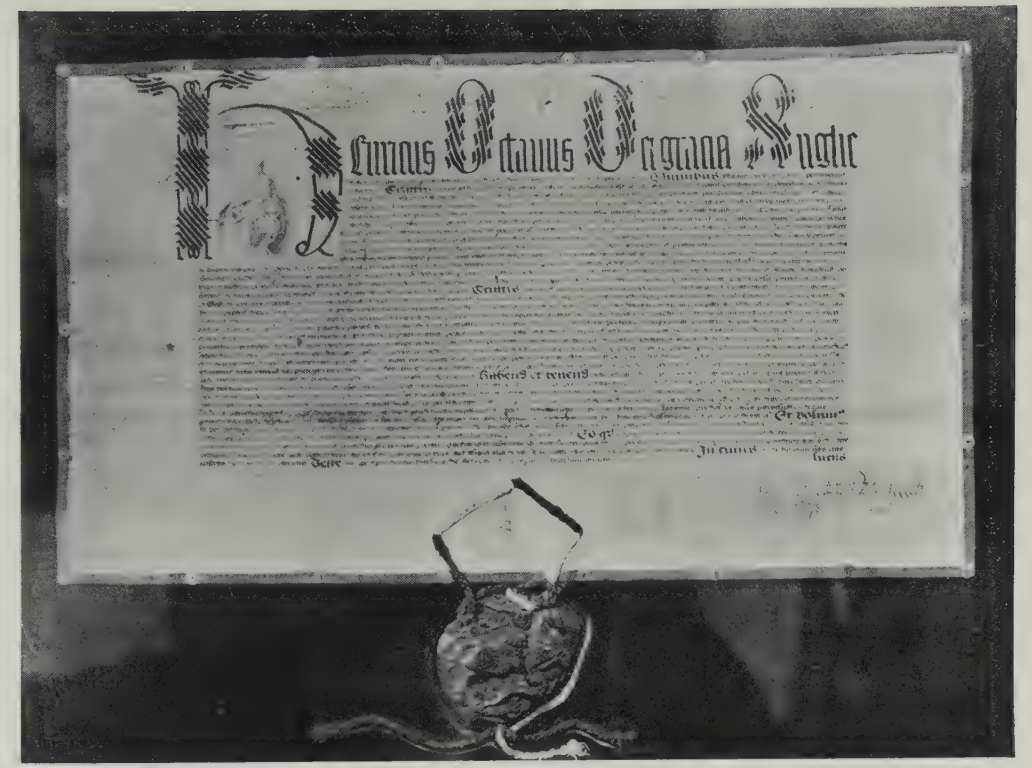
[1] The Segwykes were kinsfolk of John Bull the Mercer, who died 1540.
[2] Husbandman. [3] Farmer. [4] Miller. [5] Clothier.

Up to the suppression in 1539, the town had been rather the appendage of the Abbey, which exercised lordship over it, though the town had evidently sought and attained some sort of separate existence, as may be seen from the history of its guilds described in Chapter XI. From the year 1539 the town stood alone, and it speedily showed its vitality by the important transaction of 1544, when the townsfolk bought the great Church from the Crown for £100, say £1200 of present day money. Four men, Robert Cook, John Salt,[1] John Ham, and John Knight, are described in the deed as "Guardians of the Church of Romsey." John Knyght died about the end of the year 1549, leaving 6*s.* 8*d.* for the repair of the Parish Church, and requesting his friend, John Ham, to be one of the overseers of his will. John Salte, yeoman, made his will 29th July, 1554, and died about the close of the year.

The townspeople obtained from the Crown at the beginning of Queen Mary's reign (*c.* 1554), one or two articles of Church plate, a mere trifle indeed of what had been seized, but still worth having. A "Crismatori of silver, one littel Bottell of silver and one littell Cuppe of silver," were delivered to Robert Beare, John Raynolde, and John Levermore. Robert Bere was a husbandman, and one of the Levermores was a smith.

Another matter seems to have engaged the attention of the townsfolk at this time. Hitherto the bells had hung in a tower separate from the Church, and situate to the north of the Church, on a plot of ground east of the great churchyard. This plot still yields an income of £6, which, at the present time, is appropriated to the Churchwardens' Funds. It was now apparently resolved, owing perhaps to the unsafe condition of the tower, or to the inconvenience of having the belfry away from the Church and to the cost of its

[1] Tanner.



Deed of Sale of the Abbey Church by King Henry VIII to the Inhabitants.
[Now in the Vestry.]

To face p. 270.]

upkeep, to remove and rehang the bells in the great tower. Sir Francis Fleming in 1558 makes this entry in his will, "I give to the Church of Rumsey, towards the hanging of the bells in the tower, 20*s*." Simon Clerke had already, in 1557, left 13*s*. 4*d*. for the like purpose. Mr. Latham says that the rehanging of the bells was not accomplished till 1624, and quotes a passage from one of the Church Registers to this effect:—"This year [1624] were the bells hung up in the tower, a little before Christmas, and in the January following was the old belfry taken down; J. Cooper and William Elderfield, Churchwardens." Either, therefore, the work was delayed for sixty-seven years, or the bells at the earlier date were rehung in the old tower.

A serious loss must have occurred to the poorer folk of the town by the suppression of the alms men and women, or pensioners of the Abbey. This Charity, it will be remembered, was made by King Edgar when the Abbey was refounded in 967. A reference is made to it by the King's bailiff in his Account Roll of 1539–41, he says:—

"In alms yearly distributed between 13 poor and feeble women, by the foundation of King Edgar, late founder of the monastery, allowed in the King's book of tithes for 13 women at 40/- each, allowance this year by consideration of the King's officers £13."

In the next year he allows £10, three having died, and the same allowance is made in the year following for ten women, "as appears by a bill in the hands of Peter Westbroke and Francis Flemyng."

A similar entry deals with seven old and feeble men, who have £7 the first year, £6 the next year, "the 7th being dead," and 110*s*. is allowed the year following, with the explanation that it is for six men, "of whom one died before the feast of the Nativity of S. John the Baptist within the time of this account." It is evident that this

ancient gift was to be allowed to die out, and that the town was no longer to benefit by the charity. It is astonishing that the Crown should have swept away even this small and purely charitable institution to satisfy its greed.

The two accompanying lists have been preserved with the account. The first may be supposed to be a list of the women of King Edgar's foundation; the second, a list of the inhabitants of the Hospital of S. Mary Magdalene and S. Anthony, referred to in Chapter XII, p. 204.

AUGMENTATION OFFICE.—MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS. No. 446, FOLIO I.

The Namys of the poure Systeres of Rumsay.

Jone Carpendore.	Jone Carpenter.
Margery Ridare.	Margery Rede.
Elyzabeth Smok.[1]	Elizabeth Smok.
Marget Pursse.	Margery Purse.
Joane Crede.	Jone Crede.
Joane Houbis.	Mortua est.
	Mortua est post Festum.
Isabelle Novell.	Annunciacionis beate Marie.
Joane Arnolde.	Jone Arnold.
Flowrance Anc.	Mortua.
Elyzsabeth Sadfeld.[2]	
	Mortua est post Festum.
Edmonde Heliars.	Annunciacionis beate Marie.

The poure almysse men and wemen of the Spetyll.

	Mortuus est post Festum.
Wyllyam Hunt.	Annunciacionis beate Marie.
Robart Wernell.	Robertus Vernell.
Wyllyam Homys.	Willelmus Holme.
Wyllyam Yngram.	William Yngram.
Katerine Holbourne.[3]	Katheryne Holbourne.
Isabelle Bryone.	Mortua est.

Three lists of tax-payers, one of 1524–5, another of 1544, and another of 1549, give the names of many

[1] Altered from Rope. [2] Nota, lately putt in.
[3] Altered from Kynge.

Romsey families at this time. The first list gives 163 names, and the tax seems to have been levied from a wider class of inhabitants than on the later occasions. Six wage-earners of £1 apiece were taxed and paid 4*d.* each, a class of men not found in the other lists. In 1544 there were 42 tax-payers in the district, including Romsy Extra, and the hamlets of Woberye, Lee, Kepernham, ... , and Roke, together with 29 persons in the town, giving a total of only 71. In 1549 only 29 persons are named, and the class of taxpayers is still further limited. This latter list is of especial interest because it gives the occupations of the tax-payers, which include a smith, a wheeler, three clothiers, a miller, a tanner, two tailors, two butchers, a cosier (*i.e.*, cobbler), three gentlemen, two farmers, and six husbandmen. It may be worth recollecting that in 1340 there were but 16 tax-payers in Romsey Extra, and 56 in Romsey Infra, making a total of 72, as against a total of 71 in 1544; but no inference can be drawn as to the rise or fall of the population, owing to the variation of classes from which the taxes were drawn.

The following table gives some particulars of the three lists of the sixteenth century:—

Name.	Highest Assessment.			Lowest Assessment.			Tax.		
1524–5.	£	*s*	*d*	£	*s*	*d*	£	*s*	*d*
Dowce, Richard ...	60	0	0	—	—		3	0	0
Several persons ...	—	—		1	0	0	0	0	4
1544.									
Dowse, John ...	30	0	0	—	—		3	0	0
Smyth, Edward ...	—	—		1	6	8	0	2	8
1549.									
Kyrby, John ...	40	0	0	—	—		2	0	0
Several persons ...	—	—		10	0	0	0	10	0

The two persons, John Dowse (assessed on lands), and John Kyrby, are spoken of as gentlemen, and with reference to their assessments and to the value of money and the cost of a household it may be worth referring to the

well-known description by Hugh Latimer (born 1490) of the household of his father, a Leicestershire yeoman.[1] The latter farmed land at a rent of £3–£4, for which his successor had to pay £16 (or four times the amount), in 1549, the date of the Romsey tax-payers' list. From this farm he "tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men." His wife milked thirty kine; he had a walk for 100 sheep. He could give his daughters at their marriage £5 or 20 nobles each. He sent his son to school, and gave alms to the poor, and all this he did of the same farm. At a rather earlier date, the Black Book of Edward IV (⊕ 1483) gives the household accounts of a squire who can spend £50 a year:—

	£	s	d
Victuals	24	6	0
Repairs and furniture	5	0	0
Horses, hay, carriages	4	0	0
Clothes, alms, and oblations	4	0	0
Chaplain, 2 yeomen, 2 grooms, 2 boys, in wages ...	9	0	0
Livery of dress	2	10	0
Hounds, and charges of hay-time and harvest, etc.	1	4	0
	£50	0	0

John Dowse, the Romsey tax-payer, mentions in his will, proved 6th February, 1559, the manor of Chilworth, and "my manors of Sparshott magna and parva," and makes reference to interest he had in other places. At the date of the Romsey tax-payers' list, 1549, rents had indeed quadrupled since the time of Hugh Latimer's father, but John Dowse, with his £30 assessment and his freehold or tenancy of other properties was a man of comfortable competency, and may well have been able to spend on his household a sum perhaps exceeding the disbursement of the £50 squires of the earlier date. Richard Dowce, probably his father, had farmed the lands at More Courte and More Malens in 1539, paying £22. 12*s*. a year rent to the Crown;

[1] See Stubbs' *Constitutional History*, Vol. III.

here the son John continued to live, and an interesting glimpse of the manner of living of a gentleman, and one of the chief inhabitants of Romsey, is suggested to the mind of the student.

Some matters of interest are to be gleaned from the old wills of this period. Winchester College, it appears, held property in Romsey; this fact is mentioned as early as 1494, when William Molens leaves to his eldest son John the remainder of the lease of his house in the Market Place, which he holds of Lord Awdeley, and his dye-house and stable in *Porter's Bridge*, which he holds of the *New College* of *Winchester*.

Again in the will of John Bull, mercer of Romsey, who died in 1540, the College is mentioned. The worthy mercer had houses in Mydill Brige Strete and dwelt in a house in the Market Place. He also owned a house which John Judson the taylor had lately occupied; the latter he leaves to his sister Elizabeth Wellis, together with a coverlet "whereon was worked the salutation of our Lady." He speaks of John Mollins as his brother, and mentions as in the above will the Winchester College ground. "All my timber that lyeth at the *porte brige*, which is the ground that longeth unto the New College of Winton, should be bestowed among my housing (houses) in Rumsey."

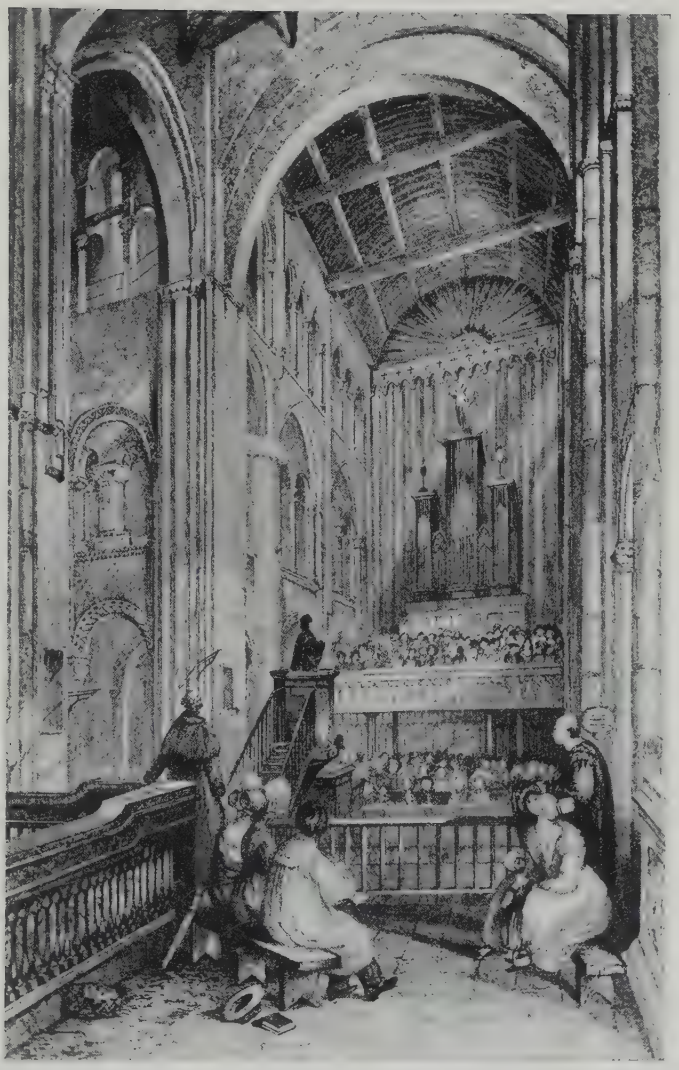
Winchester College also held property in the south of the town. The tenement of Robert Burnham, the miller, is described, 17th December, 1544, as in "Mille Strete between the tenements of Wade Manor and the lands of Winchester College." As early as 1453 the College was assessed to pay a tax of 4*s*. on goods and chattels in the town of Romsey.

The will of John Salt, yeoman, contains references to familiar place-names in the town. He died in 1555, and

the will was proved on 3rd May. "His pewke gown furred with lambe, his jacket of cloth, and dublet of lether," may serve to conjure up before the imagination an old world figure who lived in that strange transition period from the old to the modern world. His daughter Agnes, it appears, and her husband John Kychener had died in 1539, and left their children John, Thomas, and Agnes, to the care and governance of John Salt and his wife Elizabeth, their grandparents. It is not therefore surprising to find that, when the grandfather John died, he left much of his property to his two grandsons. To John came the half an acre of arable land, once Cecilie Pope's, lying behind Langeton's house in the tythinge of Maynson, and one acre of meadow in Euy betwixt the land of the said John on the north side. To Thomas came a house in Middlebridge Street, sometime Sampson's, lying at the Bridge End, together with one close bought by John Salt of Lord Audeley, lying in the back side of the said house; also another close lying without the bridge, which had been bought of Master Foster, sometime the holding of William Apowell. In addition to these there was another close, lying to the back side of the house at Bridge End beyond John Kychener's Orchard, also purchased of Master J. Foster, and property held by indenture of Lord Chidiok Pawlet,[1] and an acre of meadow in Walding, and an acre of land in Wollynfelde.

Simon Clerk, whose name is found in the lists of tax-payers of 1544 and 1549, died early in 1558. His will has a very special interest for the town, because in it, for the first time, there is a reference to the Mayor. If his sons or son have no issue, his house in Middlebridge, Arnold's house and orchard, and the orchard joining unto Robert Bull's house are to remain to the parish. *The Mayor and Constables* are alwaies to see the yearly rent thereof to be

[1] Buried at Eling.



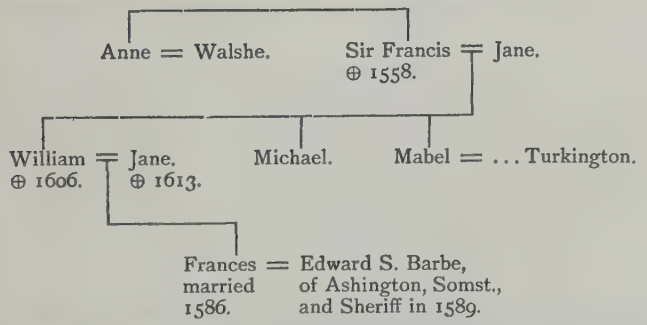
Circa 1836.

THE NAVE, FROM THE SANCTUARY.

To face p. 276.]

bestowed, the one half to the poor, the other half to help out yearly an obit for him, his wife and friends for ever. Another will, that of John Browne, dated 14th May, 1578, gives the name of an early Mayor. "I give," he says, "unto *William Pratt, now Mayor*, my best sword, unto Nicholas Cowse my harqubus with flash and tuche box." He also leaves 3*s.* 4*d.* to the repairs of Romsey church, showing that interest was still taken in their parish church by the parishioners.

This slight study of the wills of old residents must draw to an end, and may fittingly close with a full transcript of the will of Sir Francis Flemyng, who figures so largely in connection with the occupation of the Abbey property after the Suppression. Sir Francis is described as a lieutenant of ordnance in 1549. He was no doubt connected with the Flemings of Newport, I.W., one of whom, John, died in 1531, and another, Sir Thomas Fleming, who was born at Newport in 1544, became Lord Chief Justice, and bought Baddesley from one of the Fosters, and afterwards North Stoneham from the Earls of Southampton. Sir Francis lived at Broadlands, and his immediate relations, as described in his will, may be set out as follows:—



It will be seen that Sir Francis' granddaughter, Frances, the heiress of the property, brought Broadlands to the

family of S. Barbe, with which family it remained for some time, but their history belongs to a later period.

WILL OF SIR FRANCIS FLEMYNGE.
AUGUST 24TH, 1558.

I, Francis Flemyng, of brode Landes, Rumsey, knt., being syrke in bodye and perffytt of Remembrance and memorye, Lawde and prayse be to almighty God, Do ordayne and make this my last will and testament in manner and form following. And all other wylles before Thys Tyme made I doe nowe make ffrustrate and voyde.

Fyrsten, I yeld and offer up my sowle unto Almightye God my onely maker and Redemer, and my bodye to be buried within the Churche of S. Lawerence, Rumsey.

Item, I bequest unto my mother Church or S^{t}. Swythin's in Wynchester, 3/4. *Item*, I bequest unto the Hye Aulter of my sayd parrysh Churche for Tythes forgotten, 5*s*. Also I b: and give to the Churche of Rumsey towards the hanginge of the bells in the Tower, 20/–.

Item, I give and b. unto Dame Jane, my wyfe, in money, £115 and my maner house of Brodelandes, Rumsey, with all the hole stuff in it. And half my plate. Also I give to my seyd wife the occupation of my lease of Staryeffrythe during her life and after her death the same to remain to my heir being Lord of Brodelandes, Rumsey. *Item*, more I give unto my said wife 12 Kyne and a Bull, the whyche are goinge at Brodelands. *Item*, I give to my said wife 3 of my geldinges. And also I gyve to my s^{d}. wife all the woodes and underwoodes, that nowe be or hereafter shall be growen within and upon my ferme of Rownams, to be expended in and upon the maner house of brodelands, and not ells wheare with lawful ingresse and regresse to and for the felling and caryinge of ye same. And more, all my corne, provyded that she shall deliver Wyllyam Fleming 10 quarters of wheate, 10 q^{ts} barley, 5 q^{ts} ottes, thereof. And all the same corne to be delyvered one this side of mydsommer next coming after the date before written. Further, I give and b. to my wife 13 fat

bullocks and 40 fat sheep, the wh. was ordained for the provision of my house. Also I g. and b. to my wife half of the swyne and pullarye that is at my Deyryt.

Also I g. and b. to my son, Mychaell Flemynge, £100 in money and £10 rente by the yere of socage Lande in Southampton, to him and his heirs males of his bodye to be gotten. Also I b. unto my daughter, Mabel Turkington, £20. *Item*, I will that my sister, Anne Walshe, shall holde and enjoy the house with the Myllen and all and singular the grounds, wh. she the said Anne now holdeth and occupyeth by lease from me, grant^{d} during her natural life without pay^{t} of any rent for the same. Provided that if the s^{d} Anne Walshe shall happen at any time dur^{g} her life to be expulsed, evicted, or put out of the s^{d} house, Myllen, or gr^{ds}, or any part or parcel of the same, that then I will that my s^{d} Executor and his Heirs and Assigns shall pay yearly unto ye s^{d} Anne during all her life one Annuity or yearly rente of £6. 13*s*. 4*d*. by the year. Also I b. to Edmond Bull and his wife 40/- in money by the year. To be paid to the longest liver of them by my son, Wylliam Flemyng and his heirs, executors or Assigns. *Item*, I give unto my niece, Dorothy Bull, £10 in money, and to her sister, Jone, 5 marks in money towards their maryages.

Item, to my cousyn Marg^{t} Bonnam, £20 in money towards her maryadge. *Item*, I give unto Eliz. Mate, my servaunte, the reversion of the nexte copeyeholde that falleth in my landes or of the Quenes landse. To be of her choice which of them she will take. *Item*, unto Th. Somershall, my servant, a stere bullock and a cowe bullock of 2 years of age. *Item*, Nic. Rumeryll, my ser^{t} [a ditto]. *Item*, to Marg^{t} Dyrche a quarter of wheat, to be del^{d} by the assigment of my wiff upon the day of my burial. *Item*, to every man and woman ser^{t} at the deyrye 26/8 a piece in mony besyde their quarters wages. [Ditto] in the house of Brodelands 40/-. *Item*, to Raffe Browne and John Fygge 40/-. And all the residue of my goodes and cattells both moveable and unmoveable not bequeathed, my legaces performed and fulfilled and my debts paid, I give unto my sonne

Will. fflemynge, whom I make my sole executor. And he for to dyspose them for the wealthe of my soul as it shall please Almigthy God for to put in his minde.

Item, I will my Executors to give 8 gold ringes of 20/- to be distributed as follows :—

1. Sir William Keylewey, kt.
2. Mr Ric. Gyfforde, Esq.
3. „ Geo. Mylle.
4. „ Th. Pare, esq.
5. „ Worsley.
6. Mystres Geo. Myll.
7. M^r^ Th. Mylle.
8. Mystres Walloppe.

And for the due and trew execution of this my laste wyll and Testament I do make and ordein Sir Will. Kelwey, kt., and Ric. Gyfforde, Esq., to be my overseers, and they to have for their pains each one of my best geldings. Etc., etc.

Witneses—William Kelwey, kt., Richard Gyfforde, W. Fleming, George Kyrbye, H. Somershall, Ralff Browne, Nic. Rumeryll.

Probate—9 Sep., 1558.

No one who studies old wills from about 1490 to 1600 can fail to be struck by the gulf that lies between the earlier and later ones. The bequests to the guilds in the earlier series mark the strong corporate life which centred round the parish church ; these bequests cease in the later wills, and whilst piety finds, at least in some cases, other channels for alms deeds, like the poor men's box, or the erection of almshouses, corporate life must have gradually been transferred from the church to the town hall, and have partaken of a civic character.

No churchmen can but regret the decay of church brotherhoods, the recovery of which has been slow and long delayed. It may be that in the Divine providence this has issued and will issue in a more spiritual conception

of the ties which bind churchmen together, and that through much tribulation they are entering into a fuller participation in the Kingdom of God. The townsfolk of Romsey, in any case, have continued, in spite of periods of neglect, to show their care for the great building around which church life has centred for so many centuries.

A large number of Romsey wills are preserved at Somerset House, and a far larger number, belonging to the Bishop's and Archdeacon's Courts, are to be found at the Probate Registry at Winchester. A careful inspection of these wills, of the parish registers, which begin as early as 1569, of deeds in the town hall, and of the collections of Dr. Latham, together with many classes of documents in the Record Office, would form an excellent introduction and starting point for a future volume on the history of Romsey town during modern times. It is to be hoped that some enthusiastic townsman may be found to undertake what should prove if a laborious, yet a pleasant and interesting task.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE ROMSEY PSALTER.

An Account by FRANCIS W. HYNE DAVY, M.A.,
Assistant Priest of Romsey Abbey.

"Not as ours the books of old—
Things that steam can stamp and fold;
Not as ours the books of yore—
Rows of type, and nothing more.

Then a book was still a book,
Where a wistful man might look,
Finding something through the whole
Beating—like a human soul.

Something that one still perceives
Vaguely present in the leaves;
Something from the worker lent;
Something mute—but eloquent!"—AUSTIN DOBSON.

MAP OF ROMSEY TOWN AND DISTRICT.

From the Ordnance Survey Map, with ancient names of places added.

Chapter XVI.

THE ROMSEY PSALTER.

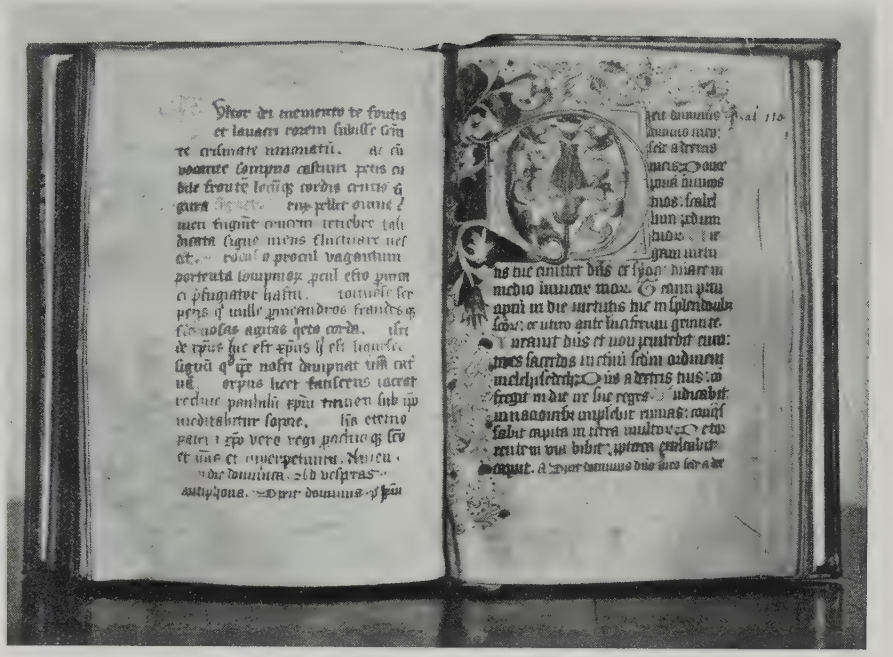
IN a glass case in the Ambulatory at the east end of Romsey Abbey, an old illuminated manuscript Psalter in Latin, may be seen. This book, described as "the Romsey Psalter," was advertised in one of Mr. Quaritch's catalogues in 1900. The Dean of Winchester, the late Dr. Stephens, kindly called the attention of the Vicar of Romsey to the fact of its being for sale; and, very soon after, the book was bought by subscription for the Abbey.

The writer of the following notes gladly contributes them at Mr. Liveing's request, hoping that they may be of interest not only to those whose special delight is in ancient MSS., but to all who welcome anything connected with Romsey Abbey and its history. Following the usual plan, we will consider the general description of the book as a MS., its special connection with Romsey and other points of liturgical or antiquarian interest.

The Romsey Psalter is a small octavo MS. of 152 folios or leaves, that is 304 pages, of vellum, each measuring $6\frac{9}{10}$ inches by $4\frac{7}{10}$ inches. With a few exceptions the usual number of lines to a page is twenty-two. The writing is said, by Mr. Quaritch, to be by an English hand of about 1440. The style is clearly that of the fifteenth century, to which period also apparently belong the old green cope, once used as an altar cloth, and the painted reredos and panel in the Abbey. Some guidance as to the date is afforded by the

non-appearance, in the Kalendar, of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 2nd July. This was the latest of the B.V.M. Feasts added to Church Kalendars before the Reformation, and (like the Feasts of the Holy Name and the Transfiguration, also not in the Psalter) has its place in our Prayer Book Kalendar. This feast, called by the old Italians "the day of S. Mary of Grace," and by the Germans the "home-seeking of Mary over the hill," was instituted by Urban VI during the schism in the papacy, about 1338. It was promulgated by Boniface IX in 1389, and again established by the Council of Basle in 1441, by which date it would be found in a good many kalendars, but Mgr. Batiffol gives 1475 as the date of its first observance by the Curia at Rome. As regards England, Canon Christopher Wordsworth in his work "The old Service Books of the English Church," after mentioning Papal sanction for the feast in 1431, says that in 1480 the Convocation of Canterbury petitioned the Archbishop to prescribe its use, and that the same year an office for the day was printed as a supplement to the Sarum Breviary: and also a little later for the Transfiguration and the Holy Name. It would seem therefore from the absence of the Visitation, that the Psalter was written before 1441, and certainly before 1481.

The capital letters are painted in red or blue, and are mostly of two-line depth. There are eight illuminated initial letters, seven of the depth of six lines and one of nine lines, the last being shewn in the illustration. These letters have floral borders or extensions down their left sides, and, with two exceptions, at either the top or the foot of the page as well. There are conventional flowers in the centres of these letters. As Mr. G. W. Bradley, in his little book on illuminated MSS., insists upon letter ornamentation being influenced by that of architecture, it



PAGE OF THE ROMSEY PSALTER.—CIRCA 1441.

To face p. 286.]

may be worth noting a certain similarity of design between the flower of the letter D in the illustration and one on a capital in the south choir aisle of the Abbey. There are no miniatures or pages with illuminated pictures, and what there is in the way of illuminated initials, though sufficiently beautiful, is not considered by expert opinion at the British Museum, to be of exactly first class workmanship.[1] But from one point of view this is not altogether a disadvantage, for, had the book been of exceeding beauty, it would probably have gone either to a rich man's collection or to some great library, instead of to Romsey Abbey, its most fitting resting-place. Judging from the dirty condition of the first and last leaves, especially the last, the book looks as if at one time in its career it had lain without a binding, which may have either become worn out, or been stripped from it. Indeed, the book itself may have only narrowly escaped the ignominious fate of many another old MS., such as being cut up to help bind printed books. The present binding is described as "old calf gilt," and is evidently of later date.

The make-up or "collation" of the book from the binder's point of view is of twenty quires, namely, 1^6, $2–13^8$, 14^4, $15–19^8$, 20^6. Each quire has its "catchword" on a scroll at the bottom of the last page. This was the first word or words of the next quire, as was the custom with MSS., whereas in the case of modern printing the "signature," either letter or number, is at the foot of the first page of each quire. It will be seen that three of the quires are not strict 8vo., two having six, and one four leaves instead of eight. The last quire is of six instead of eight, and, judging from the modern pencilled signatures, this may account for the statement in the catalogue that the book "wants a leaf or two at the end," which does not appear to be supported by the concluding contents of the book. The total number

[1] So the Hon. Secretary of the Alcuin Club, Mr. F. C. Eeles, tells me.

of leaves, 152, would have made nineteen quires of eight; their arrangement into twenty quires seems purposely made that the Kalendar may have a quire to itself, and that the first psalm of Mattins and of Vespers, on the first day of the week, may each begin a fresh quire. There is a hole through the last leaf, and in the fourth from the end and other places, but the writing is not defective, which shews that the holes were there when the book was written.

The scribe has, it seems, made a few mistakes, *e.g.* (20th June), Edmund for Edward. The abbreviations of words are of the usual kind. The obliterations, ordered by Henry VIII, of the name of S. Thomas of Canterbury and of the Pope's title "pape," have been made, but the words can still be read in places. Someone at a later date has numbered the Psalms in the margin according to the Hebrew and later English numbering, but the division of the book itself is according to the Septuagint, Vulgate, and old English arrangement. There are one or two old annotations in ordinary writing at the end, *e.g.*, "Iste est liber psalmorum," "libri hujus finis," etc.; also something that, curiously, looks not unlike a portcullis, the arms of Romsey Town, or even possibly a gridiron, the emblem of S. Laurence, the patron of the parish Church portion of the Abbey, though either of these suggestions may be fanciful.

The Psalter appears to have originally belonged to Romsey because the name of S. Ethelfleda, who was Patron Saint of the Abbey in conjunction with the Blessed Virgin Mary, occurs no less than three times in the Kalendar, namely, a red letter day, 23rd October, "Sancte Ethelflede virginis"; and two black letter days, 27th January, "Translacio S. Ethelflede," and 10th March, "Revelacio S. Ethelflede." Like nearly everything else connected with Romsey, either in architecture or history, the Psalter has its problems. The Ethelfleda question is one of them.

There were two ladies of this name in early days at Romsey, and there has been confusion between them. As this matter is discussed elsewhere in this book, it will only be necessary to deal with it so far as the Psalter is concerned. The Psalter points to the later Ethelfleda as being the Patron Saint. In the first place this is shown by its agreeing with the fourteenth century MS. *Legenda* or Lives of Saints, formerly belonging to Romsey, but now in the British Museum.

The *Legenda*, which gives the life of the second Ethelfleda, daughter of Ethelwold, a noble of King Edgar, as Patron Saint, puts her death on "the tenth day before the Kalends of November," that is 23rd October. So does the Psalter. The *Legenda* says she was "translated": the Psalter gives the day of her Translation, 27th January. Perhaps the "Revelacio" of S. Ethelfleda, on 10th March in the Psalter, has something to do with one of the miraculous manifestations recorded in her life, such as the story of the light shining from her fingers when her candle failed her at the lectern. Or it may refer to the appearance of the saint after death: or again to some miracle connected with her relics. The word seems to suggest some event which would disclose her claim to veneration as a saint, or some vision or revelation which she received.

In the next place, it is to be noted that among the later *Obits* added to the Kalendar in the sixteenth century, we have on 6th March, "Elfleda, sister of S. Edburga." Now this Elfleda[1] was a daughter of King Edward the Elder and was, with her father's help, the Foundress of Romsey Abbey, and so, clearly, is a different person from the one who already had three days in the original Kalendar. Thus the Psalter adds further testimony to the fact that at Romsey, as at Nunnaminster (S. Mary's

[1] See Chapter II and Appendix A.

Abbey), Winchester, the Foundress and the Patron Saint were different people. In the case of Nunnaminster, Queen Alswitha, wife of Alfred, was the Foundress, and S. Edburga, her grand-daughter, the Patron Saint.

There is a further question as to the identity of the S. Ethelfleda of the Kalendar. The Romsey Kalendar, on 23rd October, describes her as *virgin*, as the Romsey Ethelfleda would be; but there exist other kalendars claiming this day for an Ethelfleda, *widow*, not to mention one which assigns it to an Elfleda, *queen*. The matter is discussed at length in the *Acta Sanctorum*, and the Bollandists appear satisfied that[1] 23rd October belongs to the widow of Glastonbury, and 29th October to the Romsey Saint. Capgrave, an Augustinian Friar of the fifteenth century, in his *Nova Legenda Angliæ*, gives 29th October as the day of her death[2]; but the reason is not clear, and in face of the local evidence of the Romsey *Legenda*, supported by the Psalter, it seems hardly satisfactory to say that 23rd October was no longer the day of the Romsey Saint. Besides, it is unnecessary, for it is not at all an unknown thing for two saints of the same name to be commemorated in different kalendars on the same day, *e.g.*, two Saints Valentine, one a bishop, the other a priest, on 14th February.

The foregoing points have to be considered because they affect the "provenance" of the MS., that is the place for which it was written. The Psalter, from its character, appears to have been the private property of someone connected with the Abbey, rather than a strictly liturgical or choir book, though it might be described perhaps as quasi-liturgical. Psalters, as well as Prymers, were often used as private devotional manuals; the owners of the former had, of course, to know Latin, and were frequently, though not always, ecclesiastics. The Prymers in English usually belonged to the laity, but a great many Prymers

[1] Except in the earlier Kalendars. [2] As John of Tynemouth, previously.

were in Latin. Both books may be considered, in a sense, as Church service books used in private, or *vice versa*, as private books usable in church. For, while the Psalter is the backbone of the Breviary or Canonical Hours, the Prymer chiefly consists of the Little Office or Hours of the Blessed Virgin, which were said as an addition to the Canonical or Divine Office.

The Kalendar too is of the kind found in private non-liturgical Psalters and Prymers. These often had many more saints than the liturgical books, which only needed in their kalendars names of saints for whom they had offices or commemorations. Private kalendars, having no limit of this kind, seem, as regards the number of saints in them, intermediate between the strictly liturgical kalendars and the full lists of the martyrologies. A comparison between the Psalter and the Prayer Book Kalendar would be enough to shew this. But the non-liturgical character of the Romsey Kalendar is best seen by a comparison with a Sarum or Roman liturgical kalendar, either in the Missal or the Breviary. It is also shown by the fact that though there is a kalendar, the Psalter itself is only for a strictly ferial week and contains no saints' day services whatsoever. Mr. Edmund Bishop kindly suggests that the Romsey Kalendar has for its basis some Winchester book, and that to this the scribe made "fancy" additions. Then again the Psalms are not arranged according to the Benedictine "Regular" monastic distribution, as one would naturally expect, in a Benedictine house, but according to the "Secular" Gregorian method. The book, however, is not according to Sarum use, but distinctly Roman, as shown by antiphons and capitula and the Litany, which is the Roman one, and practically what is commonly called now the "Litany of the Saints." All this is against its being a book for choir use in a Benedictine abbey, and in favour of private ownership

by someone in the Convent, either abbess, nun, lay sister, or even a lady visitor making a long stay under the care of the Convent. There is a small Psalter in the British Museum of a somewhat different character, which was the property of a nun at Wherwell, the third of the Hampshire Benedictine nunneries, and shews that nuns had books of this kind.

It is possible that the Romsey Psalter may have had something to do with the Infirmary Chapel, which, Mr. Liveing finds, was dedicated in the name of S. Andrew, for the Kalendar has on 13th May, "Dedicacio oratorii S. Andree apli." Mr. Bishop considers this point additional strong proof of the Psalter being a Romsey book. As regards the Roman secular character of the Psalter, it may be noted that the nuns often had friars for confessors. Many of these, especially the Franciscans, used the Roman secular Breviary, not the Monastic. As friars, according to Wordsworth and Littlehales, often at this time wrote, painted and illuminated books such as the Psalter, it may have been brought or written by a friar. There had been a Friar John Burgess as confessor at the end of the previous century; there was a Carmelite in 1448; and a Franciscan from Southampton sometime between that date and 1486, during Bishop Waynflete's episcopate. Mr. Liveing has seen in that Bishop's register a license, to hear the confessions of the nuns, to John Green and William Kydford of the Minor Brothers of Southampton.

There are two points with regard to the Litany, which certainly suggest a Franciscan scribe. The first is that, in the order of the invocation of the monastic saints, instead of SS. Antony, Benedict, Bernard, Dominic, Francis, which is the usual arrangement, it has SS. Benedict, Francis, Antony, Dominic, omitting S. Bernard. This order clearly

supports the theory of the book being written by a Franciscan for private use by some one in a Benedictine house. Mr. Bishop says this S. Anthony may be the Franciscan Saint of Padua, not the earlier saint of that name generally intended. The second point is that, further on, S. Clara, the sister of S. Francis, is invoked instead of S. Anastasia. Thus the Franciscan influence seems clear. The feast of S. Francis (4th October) is entered in red in the Kalendar: S. Benedict (21st March and 11th July, translation) in black. Whether the work of writing, painting, and illuminating, was done by three or more people as was the custom in a monastic scriptorium, though sometimes even then by one, or whether it was all done by a professional scribe, is perhaps uncertain, but it is fairly safe to say that at that date it was not the work of a nun, except possibly the later annotations. It is interesting to note that the Psalter was written not so very long before printing came into use.

The Kalendar being of the kind indicated it is very difficult to give conclusive reasons for this or that variation, *e.g.*, why should the day of S. Ethelwold's "deposition," 1st August, receive no notice, when his translation, 10th September, is included? Or why, in a Kalendar of this kind, did they omit another Romsey saint, Merwinna?

A consideration of the days and saints wherein the Kalendar differs from the average English kalendars of that day seems to point out certain general tendencies belonging to this Kalendar. One is to keep what is *old*, in the way of commemorations such as the Conception of S. John Baptist, on 24th September, or in an expression such as the "Oblation" instead of the more usual "Presentation" of the B.V.M. on 24th November. Another is to include what is *new*, such as the Feast of S. Antony of Padua, or the Translation of S. Nicholas. Another is to put in

Winchester saints, like S. Judoc, which Mr. Bishop's theory, already stated, accounts for; and saints of Southern France, like SS. Lazarus, Martha, and Victor of Marseilles. On the whole, perhaps one may fairly attribute the old and the Winchester items to the influence of the Benedictine owner of the book, or to some old English kalendar used as a model, and the new and Continental to the Franciscan scribe.

The *Obits* or death days, added to the Kalendar early in the sixteenth century, are mostly those of Abbesses of Nunnaminster, from the end of the eleventh to the beginning of the fifteenth century with hardly a break, as may be seen by a comparison with the lists either in Mr. W. de Gray Birch's Book of *Nunnaminster*, or in the *Victoria County History of Hampshire*. In regard to these *Obits*, the natural theory is that the Psalter passed from Romsey to this other Benedictine house at Winchester, with which there had always been close intercourse. There are besides, *Obits* of many members of the family of S. Edburga: *e.g.*, King Alfred and Queen Elswitha, her grandfather and grandmother; King Edward the Elder and Queen Edgiva, her father and mother; and her brothers, Kings Edmund and Eadred. One or two of the Abbesses do not appear in either of the above lists, and there are one or two names difficult to interpret. For instance, Berengarius and Albreda [?] on 27th June, both apparently "religious," might conceivably be the names of the scribe and the original owner of the book. It may be interesting to note that Prymers and private Psalters were used in those days for recording events, much after the fashion of the later family Bible.

There are rubics for finding Easter and other days. Each month of the Kalendar names the signs of the zodiac, and is headed by a line of poetry giving the two

"Egyptian" or unlucky days for bloodletting, or doing any particular business. Thus for January, "Prima dies mensis et septima truncat ut ensis," the first and seventh so unlucky that they "cut off like a sword." One is counted forward from the beginning of the month, *e.g.*, 1st January, the other backward from the end, *e.g.*, 25th January; and their position is shewn by a red **d**. opposite the days. The lines appear in one of the works of the Venerable Bede and occur in many kalendars, *e.g.*, in the Wherwell Psalter just mentioned. That has also a feature not in this, namely, lines at the foot of the page referring to the occupations, agricultural, etc., of the month.

In the *Psalter* itself, with the exception of Sunday Prime, no title is given for the lesser hours, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, and Compline. The whole of the Psalms[1] are put in numerical order, and the Hours marked are Mattins, with first words of Psalms, etc., for Lauds, and then Vespers, the hymns for these Hours being given along with antiphons, versicles, capitula (little chapters), etc., in some places more fully than in others. The tendency to compress the seven or eight Hours of the Breviary into a morning and an evening service is here seen, and shews the Mattins and Evensong of the Prayer Book to be only the further development of a system already beginning. The illuminated initials divide the Psalms among the days of the week, whereas now in the Prayer Book Psalter they are spread out over a month. So the first Psalm of Mattins each day has an illuminated initial, and there is one, extra large, at the head of all the Vesper Psalms, for Sunday, as seen in the illustration. After the Psalms come the Canticles of both Old and New Testaments, with the Te Deum, Quicunque Vult, and Litany.

On what was originally a blank leaf between the

[1] See plan, p. 301.

Mattin and Vesper Psalms there is a special prayer, added later, not in ordinary psalters. A face can be seen in the small initial capital. Mr. Bishop says this prayer is a late mediæval composition, and suggests that the figures, following its Amen, are 1469, the probable date of its inclusion in the Psalter. There follows a beautiful hymn, "Cultor dei memento," which used to be in the Breviary for Compline from Passion Sunday to Maundy Thursday, but is not in Modern Roman Breviaries. A translation of it can be seen in the new edition of A. & M., number 108. This also was added later, and the spaces are still left for capitals which, as can be seen on the left page of the illustration, have never been painted in. Translations of the twenty-three Hymns of Mattins, Lauds, and Vespers for the week, as well as the extra hymn, may be seen in the Office Hymn Book. "Lucis Creator" is in A. & M., new edition 15; "Splendor Paternae gloriae," A. & M. 2, both editions; and "O Lux beata Trinitas," A. & M., 36 new edition. Further special additional matter follows at the end of the book after the Litany: a metrical prayer, with Litany endings, for "divers kinds of tribulation." Mr. Bishop says this prayer is seventh century in style and is like those to be found in the Book of Cerne, or the Newminster Books; also that the expression "sanctos et electos" is after the manner of old Irish liturgical books, and "parce omnibus peccatis," Spanish. Then there is a short prayer against hurtful forces, whether of fire or storm; then a prayer against tempests, which is still found among the Orationes Diversae at the end of the Modern Roman Missal. This prayer and the preceding one are both in the Rituale Romanum under the heading "De Processionibus, Preces ad repellendam tempestatem."

Last of all there is an invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary bidding her to rejoice as Mother of our Lord Jesus

Christ, Queen of Heaven, Mistress of the World, and Empress of Hell (lower regions), and to have mercy on the writer and on all Christian people. The Latin is, "Gaude Maria virgo, mater domini nostri Jesu Christi, regina celi, domina mundi, imperatrix inferni, miserere mei et totius populi Christiani." The titles of our Lady, as queen of heaven and mistress of the world are frequently met with in Modern Roman books, but the other, "empress of hell" (purgatory), seems to have disappeared. Maskell, in *Monumenta Ritualia*, quotes a Primer of c. 1410 containing the expression. Hampson, in *Medii Aevi Kalendarium*, quotes a sermon of Mirk in which it occurs; and Waterton, in *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, shows it in a will of 1492, and an Anglo-Saxon poem of the tenth century; and also points out that in the rare instances where the Virgin is depicted with a triple crown, the same idea is included of her being Queen of the Church, not only Triumphant in Heaven and Militant in Earth, but also of the Church Suffering in Purgatory.

The only indication of the travels of the book between Nunnaminster and Quaritch's, is the name of T. H. Lloyd on the fly leaf in modern writing.

ROMSEY KALENDAR.

SELECTED ITEMS.

("Not in" means not in Romsey Kalendar.)

Jan. 14.—S. Felix "in pincis" (in Brev. Rom. place of Saint's burial, 260).
„ 17.—[S. Antony, *not* in.] S. Sulpicius (Archbishop of Bourges, 647).
„ 27.—Translation of S. Ethelfleda. } Apparently these feasts not in any other Kalendar.
Mar. 10.—Revelation of S. Ethelfleda. }
„ 15.—S. Longinus "qui latus domini perforavit." (cf. Kalendars in Hampson).
„ 19.—Translation of S. Mary Magdalen. (Feast seldom found: evidently French).
„ 27.—"Resurreccio domini" (Annotine Easter. cf. Dict. Christian Antiq.).
April 2.—Deposition of S. Mary of Egypt. } Old feasts which at date of Psalter had mostly disappeared from "liturgical" Kalendars.
„ 13.—S. Eufemia, V.M. (Calcedon, 303.) }
May 9.—Translation of S. Nicholas. (Called a "new feast" at Sarum in 1452.)
„ 13.—Dedication of the oratory of S. Andrew the Apostle.
„ 16.—Brandan, Ab. (578. Irish. Popular legends. Feast in a few old Kalendars.)
„ 24.—S. "Dnīči conf." (Day of S. Dominic's translation.)
June 13.—S. Antony "conf. de ordīē mīor." (Franciscan, of Padua, 1231.)
„ 20.—Edmund (for Edward).
July 2.—[Visitation B.V.M., *not* in.]
„ 4.—Translation and *ordination* of S. Martin. (B. of Tours, 397; body translated, 473.)
„ 21.—(Besides S. Praxedis) S. Victor (of Marseilles, 303).
Aug. 1.—[S. Ethelwold's deposition *not* mentioned here.]
„ 5.—Edward (for Oswald).
„ 6 and 7.—[Tranfiguration and Holy Name, *not* in.]
„ 13.—(Besides S. Hippolytus) S. Radegund (of Poîtiers, 587).
„ 16.—S. Arnulph. (B. of Metz, 640).
„ 20.—S. Philibert. (Ab. of Jumiéges, 684.) } In some old Kalendars: cf. Hampson.
Sept. 10.—Translation of S. Athelwold. (B. of Winchester, [984.)
„ 24.—Conception of S. John Baptist.
Oct. 8.—(Besides S. Pelagia) S. Demetrius and S. Symon. (cf. Dict. Chr. Antiq.)
„ 11.—(Besides S. Nicasius) S. Ethelburga (of Barking, 664).

Oct. 23.—S. Ethelfleda, virgin.
,, 26.—S. Amandus, B. (Flanders, 675). } cf. Hampson.
Nov. 17.—S. Anianus (B. of Orleans, 453). [S. Hugh, *not* in].
,, 21.—*Oblacio* scē Marie vg̃is. (Use of older term instead of "Presentatio.")
Dec. 4.—(Besides S. Barbara) translation Bn̄d (Benedict). } cf. Dict. of Chr. Antiq.
,, 10.—Victoricus, Fuscianus and Gentianus, M.M. (of Amiens). } cf. Dict. of Chr. Antiq.
,, 13.—(Besides S. Lucy) S. Judoc. (Of Ponthieu, 669; relics translated to Winchester, 903.)
,, 17.—S. Ignatius. S. Lazarus and S. Martha. (Specially honoured at Marseilles.)

OBITS.

B signifies that the names of Abbesses are in Mr. de Gray Birch's list in Book of *Nunnaminster*.

V signifies that the names of Abbesses are in the *Victoria County History of Hampshire*.

Jan. (?) 14.—Abbā Cristina dnā (? Christine de Winton, V. 1287–99).
,, 15.—dnā Adela, abbā (?)
Feb. 9.—dnā Alicia de la Mare, 1365–83 or 5 (B and V).
,, (?) 20.—Isabella, abbā (?)
Mar. 6.—Elfleda soror Edbg̃e vg̃. (Elfleda, Foundress of Romsey, half-sister of S. Edburga, Patron of Nunnaminster).
,, 9.—Commemoracio familiarum et benefactorum nostrorum.
April 5.—dnā Matilda Holme, ab. 1410–14 (B and V).
,, 6.—dnā Johanna Demede, ab. 1384 or 5–1407 or 10 (B and V).
,, 7.—dnā Cristina Hardi, ab. 1414–17 or 18 (B and V).
May 16.—Clarissa, abbā 1174 (B and V).
,, 17.—Alia, abba (? Alicia, 1084, B and V).
,, 18.—d. Matilda de Spine abbā, 1337 or 8–49 (B and V).
,, 23.—Edmundus fratr Edbg̃ vg̃s (brother of S. Edburga, King, 940–946.
June 19.—Em̄a, ab. (?)
,, 27.—Berengarius (mo) Albreda (mo de tony) (?)
July 6.—Lucia, abba 1270–87 (B and V)).
,, 17.—Edwardus rex pater scē Edbge. (King Edward the Elder, father of S. Edburga, 901–925).
,, 19.—dnā Cristina Wayte, abbā 1364–5 (B and V).
Aug. 23.—Edgiva matr scē Edb̃ vg̃. (Queen, second wife of Edward the Elder, mother of S. Edburga).
,, 30.—Agnes, abbā 1236–65 (B and V). (This agrees with day of death given by B.)

Oct. 14.—dnā Margarita Moleyns, abba 1349–64 (B and V).

" 27.—Alvredus rex avus scē Edbg̃e. (King Alfred, 871–901, grandfather of S. Edburga. His death day usually given as 28th, sometimes 26th.)

Nov. 4.—Matilda Pecham, abba 1313–37 (B and V).

" 19.—dñā Eufemia, abba 1265–70 (B and V). (B gives her death the next day.)

" 23.—Eldredus rex fr. scē Edbg̃e .vg. (King Eadred, 946–955, brother of S. Edburga.)

Dec. 5.—Ealiswide regina ava scē Edbgē fundatrix hujus. (Queen Elswitha wife of Alfred, grandmother of S. Edburga and Foundress of Nunnaminster).

" 14.—dnā Matilda abbā (B 1276–1282 or later).

N.B.—Mr. de Gray Birch says "the precise dates of Edburga's birth and death are not recorded." Several Kalendars assign 15th June as the day of her "Deposition," but no day is given to her in the Romsey Kalendar or Obits. The Edburga, whose translation is commemorated in some Kalendars on 18th July, appears more probably to have been Abbess of Minster, in the Isle of Thanet, in the eighth century.

PLAN OF THE PSALTER.

Division of the Psalms.	*Notes.*
MATTINS. I (**B**eatus vir) to XXVI. Dominica (Sunday).	For Mattins, on Sunday, are given the alternative Hymns with rubrics; and Psalms I—XXI (Prayer Book numbers used in this plan), divided into their three Nocturns. Antiphons given, except where the Psalms belong to other hours. This applies throughout the Psalter. For Sunday Lauds—alternative Hymns with Antiphon, Versicle, and Response. For Sunday Prime—Psalms XXII—XXVI only. On weekdays, for Mattins, the Invitatory and Hymn with the Antiphons to the Psalms. After the Mattin Psalms, there follow, each day, the first words of the Psalms and Canticles, for Lauds, with Antiphons, Capitulum, and the Hymn.
XXVII (**D**ominus illuminatio) to XXXVIII Feria Secunda (Monday).	
XXXIX (**D**ixi custodiam) to LII. Feria Tertia (Tuesday).	
LIII (**D**ixit insipiens) to LXVIII. Feria Quarta (Wednesday).	
LXIX (**S**alvum me fac) to LXXX. Feria Quinta (Thursday).	
LXXXI (**E**xultate Deo) to XCVII. Feria Sexta (Friday).	
XCVIII (**C**antate Domino) to CIX. Sabbato (Saturday).	
Additional—Prayer, "O Adonai dnē, etc., and Hymn, "Cultor dei memento."	
VESPERS (for the week). CX (**D**ixit Dominus) to CL.	The usual number of these Psalms assigned to Vespers each day, except where otherwise allotted. Hymns, Antiphons, and Capitula given.
The Canticles of Old and New Testaments, with Te Deum, Benedicite, and Quicunque.	
The Litany.	
Additional Prayers—Oratio pro diversis tribulacionibus, "Audi nos Jesu Christi deus"; "Omnipotens sempiterne deus"; "A domo tua"; "Gaude Maria Virgo."	

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE FAMILY "DE ROMESEY."

"From whom issued divers Knights of great note and respect, both here and in Hampshire."

GERARD'S *Notes on Somerset.*

Chapter XVII.

THE FAMILY "DE ROMESEY."

A STAINED glass window has lately been inserted in the north transept, to the memory of Almaric Rumsey, Barrister-at-Law, and Professor of Indian Jurisprudence, King's College, London. Two shields, in glass mosaics, fill the tympanum above the tracery, and quartered on these may be seen the coat of arms of the ancient family of this name:—"Argent a fesse gules with a label of five points azure." In the middle ages, the label was of three points.

The present family claims a connection with the de Romeseys of old days, who for many years lived in Hampshire and Somerset, and were at one time closely connected with the Abbey. Gerard in his *Notes on Somerset*, says of Ocle or Oakley in that county:—

"This was the possession and dwelling of John Bissett, descended by a collateral line from that great Manasses Bissett, a Baron and Sewer to King Henry II. This John Bissett, by Katharine his wife, daughter and coheir of Edmund Bassett, of Salford, near Bristol, had two daughters, his heirs, one whereof, namely Katharine, brought this Ocle unto her husband, Sir Walter de Romesey, who lived in K. John's time and held divers lands in these parts of the ancient barons of Kilpecke, in Herefordshire. This Walter was father of John, who was father of another Sir Walter, from whom issued divers Knights of great note and respect, both here and in Hampshire, for I do verily persuade myself that they took their sirname from Romsey, a town well known in that county."

A Sir Walter held land in Rokeburne, near Fordingbridge, as early as 18th September, 1199. He is spoken of in the Red Book of the Exchequer as holding lands, both in Dorset and Somerset, in 1212—1217, and is found as an itinerant Justice and Keeper of Forests in 1218. In the next year he appears as attorney on behalf of Abbess Maud Patric, or her successor, in the King's Court at Winchester, about a piece of land at Lecford. He was Sheriff of Hants and Wilts and Coroner in 1228–9, and either he or his son is distinctly spoken of as Steward of the Abbey in 1231. On the 10th June, 1224, he receives a royal order to deliver to the Prior of Ivychurch the nuts collected in Pancet Forest and deposited with him by the verderer and foresters, and on the 14th July, in the same year, he has orders to deliver to Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury, forty cartloads of fuel, of dry wood and brushwood in Clarendon Forest, of the King's gift. This Walter is no doubt the one referred to by Gerard, but it may be a question whether this writer has not confused him with another, whose wife Katharine held the property in Saltford jointly with her husband, Sir Walter Romesighe, in 1316.[1]

In the latter part of the thirteenth century a number of de Romeseys are mentioned—John and Walter, the sons of Richard, obtain possession of a messuage in the town, 23rd February, 1256. Walter holds lands of the Abbey in Wilts in 1275, and in 1278, John de Romesey grants a messuage to Nicholas de Romesey in Romesey. The same John obtains a quit claim from John and Clemence Loke of a messuage there in 1281; this transaction seems to have been repeated in 1286.

A John, perhaps the same, is recommended by Bishop John de Pontoise for preferment in 1292, and is found to be

[1] See below p. 307, and pedigree.

Prebendary and Canon of Edington, in the Abbey in 1294, when he gives land to the Abbey in Terstwode; he is succeeded by John de London in 1302, and may therefore have died before that date. Nicholas probably survived him, for one of this name was an itinerant justice; and in 1316 an order is sent to the Abbess to examine the Rolls of this Nicholas, late Justice, which are said to be in her treasury, and all other muniments touching certain matters, and to send them under seal to Westminster.

The pedigree of the main branch of the family becomes clear with Sir Walter de Romesighe, who held Oakeley, Modiford Terry, and Comwych, in Somerset, before 1286. In 1316–17 Katharine is mentioned as his wife, but she seems to have been his second wife, inasmuch as a property in Saltford, near Bristol, was granted to Walter and Katharine and their heirs, and failing their heirs then to Walter's son John and his wife and their heirs. John therefore had a mother who cannot be identified with Katharine.

This Walter was accused of causing the death of Thomas atte Mounte in 1319. He died before October, 1333, possessed of a moiety of Firnham in Hampshire, near Fordingbridge. The property consisted of land and houses, and a careful description is given of this land, with its value and sowings. With it went "six acres of great wood and common on which is no underwood or pasture, on account of the shade of the trees." Besides this there was a moiety of Wynesford Manor, Somerset, and the Manor of Ocle which he held in socage of Richard de la Bere, and a third part of Modeford Terry. There were services at the court of Haselbere every third week. These manors Walter held jointly with his wife Katharine, and her dower is mentioned when she had become a widow in 1334.

Long before Sir Walter's death his son John with his wife Margaret are spoken of, as early indeed as 1316–17, and it may therefore be supposed that he was born in the previous century. He was thirty years old and more at his father's death, but he died directly after this event, and in 1334 his son becomes heir to Walter the grandfather's property. The chief interest attaching to John is centred in his wife, who was a person of no little importance. This Margaret was daughter of John Byset by Katharine Bassett, and she brought the Manor of Rokeburne near Fordingbridge to the family of Romesey. A dispute came into Court in later times (1419) respecting the right of presentation to the church of Wynfrith in Somerset, and the evidence brought before the judge gives incidentally an account of Margaret's relatives. It appears that her uncle John Bassett held the right of presentation to this church alternately with a family of the name of "de Bayons." John Bassett died childless, and so did his brother Edmund, and the family property came to their sisters Katharine, Isabel, and Margaret. Margaret granted her portion in Wynfrith to Katharine, which descended to Margaret the younger, Katharine's daughter. On the next vacancy of the living Margaret the younger, or as she may now be called Margaret de Romesey, could not agree with her aunt Isabel in presenting the same person, and presented her own nominee.

After her husband's death Margaret de Romesey married Robert Martin of Yeovil. The couple are mentioned in 1336–7, in 1343, and in 1346, when Robert holds in Rokeborne a ninth part of a knight's fee, which was John de Bysete's, which holding was therefore in right of his wife. In 1353 Robert Martin, donsel, and Margaret Romesi his wife, are spoken of as belonging to the diocese of Bath and Wells, and receive a confirmation of a plenary remission,

once granted them by Pope Clement VII, but which was then lost. Margaret died 16th September, 1373, possessed of the Manor of Rokebourne, worth £20 yearly. The heir of Sir John de Romesey and Margaret Bisset was Walter. At the time of his father's death in 1334 he was under age; by 1345–6 he is recognized as of full age, and is ordered on 9th April, 1346, to have seizin of the property belonging to him. He married as his first wife Johanna Martyn, the widow of Emery Northlode. Her name suggests a connection with her husband's step-father, Robert Martyn. By her Sir Walter had one son, John, who was killed beyond the seas, and two daughters, Margaret and Isabel, who both married. Johanna was still alive in 1350, and very possibly survived for some years. On her death Sir Walter married again, and this time he took Alice, daughter of William Fillol. By her he had two sons and two daughters, Thomas, his heir (who is said by some deeds to have been Johanna's son), Oliver, who died without issue, Marion, whose descendants will be described presently, and Margaret, who was a nun and perhaps abbess at Wilton, near Salisbury. When his mother Margaret died, 16th September, 1373, Sir Walter did homage for her property, and was then forty years and more. It was probably "more" by several years, and he must have been quite an old man when he died, 3rd January, 1404. His wife Alice survived him but a few months, and passed away the next year. From the inquiry made at their deaths the family owned considerable estates in Hampshire, viz., Rokeburne, Romsey, Dene, La Hyde, and Mershwode or Marchwood, with others in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, as Coombe Byset, Otterhampton, Comwich, Pipulpenne, Modeford Terry, Ocle, and North Perret, where there is still land called Rumsey's.

Sir Walter's eldest son, Thomas, died before his father

in 1399, and therefore the heir to Sir Walter was his grandson, another Thomas, who with his brother, Walter, was born of Alianora, the sister of Lawrence Drewe. Thomas, junior, now Sir Thomas, came of age 1411–12; he married one Johanna, by whom he had one daughter, his heiress. In 1415 he went abroad in the retinue of Sir John Arundell, and died 15th October, 1420. His wife survived him for twenty years, dying on 11th August, 1440; their daughter Joan was then about twenty-two years old, she had come of age in 1434–35, at which date she was a married woman. This lady not only inherited from her father, but also from her uncle and his son, both named Walter, the latter having died under age on the last of February, 1430. These two Walters, father and son, seem to have enjoyed the family's property, which lay in Somerset, Orchardlegh, Ocle, and Modeford Terry. Joan, the heiress, was married to one Thomas Payne, she was still alive in 1443–44, but may possibly have died before her husband, whose death is mentioned as taking place 31st December, 1447. With Joan ended the direct line of this branch of the family.

Before leaving these people it may be worth while describing a curious law suit, which gives a vivid picture of law proceedings in past times and introduces some old world figures. The deeds are given here in full, and are worth transcribing, if only for the account they give of the old servants and the description of the white-haired Thomas Romsey.

EARLY CHANCERY PROCEEDINGS.

No. 31.

Petition of Richard Hatfeld, gentleman, Thomas Swete and Jane his wife that, whereas variances have been depending between them and Roger Wyke and Jane his wife concerning

the title to the Manor of Rokebourn and to other lands late of Jane who was wife of Thomas Payne, which variances have been compromised, and, considering that Roger and Jane entered into the premises after the death of the said Jane Payn and took all evidences of the title and descent of the petitioners, the Chancellor grant a writ of *dedimus potestatem*, that John Popham, knight, and Henry Champneys of Frome, gentleman, who have very knowledge of the title to the premises, and also any other persons having any knowledge, may be examined on oath, and their examinations, so taken, returned to Chancery.

No. 32.

Writ of the King, commanding the examination of the said John Popham, knight, and Henry Champneys of Frome, gentleman, and any others, upon the said petition. Dated 21st March, 2 Edward iiij [1462].

No. 33.

By virtue of this writ, on Tuesday next after the close of Easter next after the date of the writ, at Shaftesbury, co. Dorset, John Smyth of Domerham, co. Wilts, aged 100 years; Agnes Maundevile of Lymyington, co. Somerset, aged 90 years; and Nicholas Chalk of Rokebourne, co. Southt, aged 60 years, were examined on oath. [27 April, 1462.]

John Smyth says that Walter Rumsey, knight, was seised of the Manor of Rokeburne, and married Joan, by whom he had issue—John, Thomas, and Margaret. After Joan's death, Walter married Alice, by whom he had a son—Oliver—and a daughter whose name deponent does not remember. Oliver died without issue. The said Thomas, son of Walter, married Eleanor, sister of Lawrence Drewe, by whom he had two sons—Thomas and Walter. Thomas was knighted and had a daughter Joan, whose wardship during her minority after the death of her father, Master John Chiltirn, had by commission of the King. Afterwards the said Joan married Thomas Payne.

The said John Smyth asked how he has knowledge of the foregoing, and if he knows anything of the death of Thomas,

son of Walter, and how old Thomas was at his death, says that he was born at Domerham by Rokeburn, where the said Walter Romsey, Knight, lived. Thomas, son of Walter was, at the time of his death, aged about sixty years, and he was buried at Bradley.

The said Agnes says the same that John Smyth has said; and further, that the said Margaret, daughter of Walter Romsey, Knight, married John Hunteley, and Agnes saw them at Okley, co. Somerset, many times.

The said Nicholas says that his mother was nurse of the said Thomas and Walter, sons of Thomas, and that his mother told him the foregoing, and often said, in her lifetime, that Thomas, the father of Thomas and Walter, was son of the said Walter Romsey, Knight, and Joan his wife.

Also, by virtue of the said writ, on the eve of S. John the Baptist next, after the date of the writ, at Salisbury, Thomas Freman, of New Sarum, merchant, aged 69, and Oliver Brytte, of Rokebourn, aged 92, were examined on oath. [23 June.]

Thomas Freman says that he well knew Thomas Romsey, esquire, who was afterwards knighted, in parts beyond the sea, in the retinue of Henry V. He also well knew Thomas, father of the said Thomas Romsey, aged sixty years and more, and white-haired.

Oliver Brytte says that he well knew Walter Romsey, Knight, and well knew that he had two wives, of whom the first was called Joan, by whom he had issue, John, Thomas, Margaret, and Isabel—John being killed beyond the sea, as was said; Thomas married, and had five sons and daughters before he died; the said Thomas at his death was aged sixty and more. The said Margaret married John Huntley, and is buried in the church of R[okebourn] aforesaid. The said Isabel married John Popham, and died without issue. The second wife of the said Walter was called Alice, by whom he had issue, Oliver, Marion, and Margaret. Oliver died without issue; Marion married a certain Byngham; Margaret, her sister, was professed in Wilton Abbey.

The said Oliver Brytte, asked how he knows the foregoing,

says that he was born at Rokebourn, and was servant to Walter Romsey, Knight, and also to Thomas his son, and lived in their house.

CORAM REGE ROLL.

No. 808, m. 80; 3 Edward iiij, Easter Term. [1463.]

Thomas Swete of Bradeford by Yeuell, co. Dorset, glazier, and Joan his wife, and Richard Hatfeld late of Aldbere, co. Somerset, gentleman, were attached to answer to Roger Wyke and John Wyke for entering into their manor of Rokeborne on Monday next before the feast of S. John the Baptist, 1 Edward iiij, to their damages of 1000*l.* [22 June, 1461.]

The defendants say that long before the entry is said to have been made, and before Roger and John had any right in the manor, *Walter Romsey*, Knight, at New Sarum, according to ecclesiastical law, was affianced to Joan Martyn, and, after their banns had been proclaimed on three festivals at intervals (*inter se distantes*) they were married, and had issue *Thomas* and *Margaret*. And afterwards Joan, who was wife of Thomas Payn, was seised of the said manor of Rokeborne, after whose death it descended to the said Joan, wife of Thomas Swete, as her kinswoman and heir, namely, daughter of John, son of Margaret, daughter of the said Margaret, daughter of the said Walter Romsey, father of the said Thomas, son of Walter, father of Thomas, father of the said Joan Payn, whose heir she is; and the said Thomas Swete and Joan entered the manor in her right, after the death of the said Joan Payn, and were seised thereof until Roger and John expelled them, claiming the manor by pretext of a demise made to them for life by the said Joan Payn. Upon this, Thomas, Joan, and Richard their servant, made the entry of which Roger and John complain.

Roger and John say that the said Walter Romsey and Joan, his wife, had no daughter Margaret, and that Joan, wife of Walter Romsey, died at Rokbourn in the lifetime of Walter, who afterwards married at Rokbourn Alice, daughter of William Filoll,

esquire, and had issue, the said *Thomas* (whom the defendants suppose to have been the son of Walter and Joan) and *Mary*. It is true that Joan, who was wife of Thomas Payne, died seised of the said manor. After her death it descended to Joan, daughter of Thomas Byngham, and William Horsey, as her kinsmen and heirs, namely, to Joan, daughter of Thomas Byngham, as one of the daughters and heirs of the said Mary, and to William Horsey, as son of Eleanor, the other daughter and heir of Mary, daughter of the said Walter, father of the said Thomas, son of Walter, father of Thomas, father of the said Joan Payn whose heirs William and Joan are; the said William and Joan entered the manor after the death of Joan Payn, and being seised thereof, before the entry of which Roger and John complain, they demised the same to the said Roger and John for life, and by virtue of this demise Roger and John were seised of the manor until the defendants entered it. The defendants affirm that Walter Romsey and Joan, his wife, had a son, Thomas, as they said before.

Jury of the neighbourhood to be summoned—adjourned. The jury say that Thomas, whom the defendants suppose to have been the son of Walter Romsey and Joan, was son of the same Walter and of the said Alice, his wife, as the said Roger and John have affirmed. They assign damages to them for the said entry and costs, two hundred marks. Judgment, that they recover from the said Thomas Swete, Joan his wife, and Richard Hatfeld, the said two hundred marks.

The Marion or Mary spoken of in these deeds was the great aunt of Joan, the last of these Romeseys. She survived her husband, Sir Thomas Bingham, who died about 1403. On his death she was married to John Peny, and lived on till about 1416. A charter relating to the Manor of Sutton Bingham, with the advowson of the church there, and to land in East Coker, gives the arms of the Romseys on the seal "a fesse, and in chief a label of three points," with the legend "Sigillum, Walteri de Romesey," and adds

some particulars of the Binghams. Mary, it appears, kept possession of the title-deeds of this property, but after her death her second husband, John Peny, handed them over in solemn form to the husbands of her two surviving daughters, Henry Horsey, the husband of Alianor, and Thomas Cayleway, the husband of Johanna. An indenture was drawn up in which it was recorded that John Peny handed over to these two gentlemen in the presence of witnesses divers chests, hampers, and "pixides," and eighty-four charters, rolls of court, and other muniments relating to their wives' inheritance. This indenture is dated 1416, and is now at Montacute House.

Joan married a second time, and her husband, Roger Wyke, with John, probably his son, had possession of Rokeburne. Alianora's son, William Horsey, died on 1st April, 1448, leaving as his heir a young son Thomas, then seven years of age. The latter, when he grew up, married, but had no family, and on his death left a widow Anne, who shared the property with his brother John. Thomas Horsey's death took place on 25th February, 1477; he had property in Wilts and Somerset, besides the Hampshire properties at Dene, La Hyde, Romesey, Mounte, and Mershwode, which, with the exception of Dene, are described as held of the Abbess of Romsey. John, his brother and heir, was at this time thirty years and more; he is mentioned as still alive in 1504, and as the owner of Marchwood, which *John Rumsey*, one of another branch of the family, at that time held of him.

The mention of a John Rumsey at this late date, introduces other branches of the family. The pedigree is not easy to follow however. There was a John de Romesey, of Marchwode, as early as 1315–16, and a John, sen., with Maud, his wife, of the same place, in 1335; his son John is referred to in connection with Testwode in 1349. A

Richard held a messuage in Romsey in 1367, and there was a John of West Worldham and Rose, his wife, in 1375. A John, died 14th January, 1377, holding in right of his wife Avice property at Godshulle, La Folde, Lyndhurst, Credelstrowe, and Bourghate. The earliest consecutive pedigree begins with Richard, who held the manor of Bykton by Fordingbridge, c. 1421. The manor had been given to a family of the name of Frank, with a remainder to Richard, "who continued in possession upwards of forty years, and left it to his son John, who entered into possession and peacefully enjoyed it for thirty-three years and more till his death, when it descended to John the younger, his son and heir." John the elder died 19th July, 1494, John, jun., being thirty-four years old and more. The latter lived till 26th December, 1503, and a description of his property is set out:—

INQUISITIO POST MORTEM.

Inquisition taken at Fordyngbrigge, co. Southton, 31st January, 19 Henry vij [A.D. 1504], after the death of *John Rumsey*.

The said John held no lands of the King in chief as of his crown, but held the Manor of Bykton of the King as of the earldom of Salisbury,[1] by fealty only, The Manor is worth by the year, clear, 10*l*. He held the Manor of Mershewode of John Horsey, esquire, by fealty, and by a yearly rent of three quarters of salt. The Manor is worth by the year, clear, 40*s*. He held the Manor of Tachebury of the warden of New College, Winchester, by a yearly rent of 18*s*. 10½*d*., payable at Easter and Michaelmas. The Manor is worth by the year, clear, 40*s*.

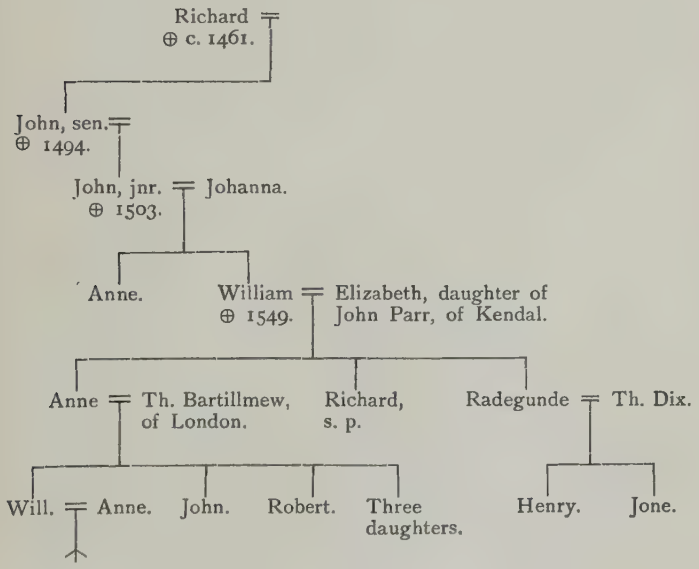
He died 26th December last. William Rumsey is his son and heir, aged twenty-three years and more.

This John Romesay made his will on 21st December, 1503, and desires that his body should be buried within the

[1] Edward, Earl of Salisbury, died 1484, aged ten years, and the earldom was in abeyance until 1513.

choir of the parish church of S. Mary, Fordingbridge, and wills that a monument be erected over him. Some special interest attaches to William Rumsey the heir, because he married Elizabeth, daughter of John Parr of Kendal, and must therefore have been connected with Katharine, daughter of Thomas Parr of Kendal, the lady who became successively wife of Henry VIII and Sir Thomas Seymour. William Rumsey left no male heir, his son Richard dying without issue before his father. An account of the two daughters and the property is to be found in their father's will, dated 8th June, 1548, and proved 19th September, 1549. The will is here transcribed both because it gives some account of household goods of the period, and because it mentions several places in the neighbourhood.

WILLIAM RUMSEY
OF BICTON AND TATYSBERY.



WILL OF WILLIAM RUMSEY, OF BICTON.

In the name of God Amen, the VIII day of June the yere of our Lord God 1548, I William Rumsey of Bicton of the parish of ffordingbridge in the dioc. of Winton, of perfect mynde and remembrance, god allwayes magnified, do ordyn, constitute and make this my testament and last will in manner and form following:—First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God my creator, to Jesus Christ my redeemer, to the Holy Ghost in all my necessities my only comforter, which I stedefasly do believe to be three persons and one God, to our lady Saynt Mary and all the company of heaven, desiring them to pray for me that I may be possessioned of that inheritage, wh. ondowghtingly I believe god hath prepared for his electe. And my body to be bur[d] in the North eyle of the saide par. ch. of Fordingbridge when it shall please god to call for me. Also I will my body be browht in earthe as shortly as it may be conveniently.

And of the goodes left to my distribution I give to the Trinitie Church of Winchester 4*d*. Also to the high alter of my parish church 4*d*. Item, I give to bye bokes for the mayntayning of the divine service in my said parish church 6*s*. 8*d*. Also I will that at the day of my burial be distributed among priestes, clarkes, and pore people, 40*s*. And at my monithes mynde I will only the priests and clarkes to be present. . . . . shall be given them in wages.

Also I will that all my evidences and Court rowlles, which evidences and Court rowlles Th. Bartillmew now has in his keep[g], concerning Bicton, by my hands delivered, be putt into a coffer and so be faste locked with ij lockes and sealid, and a plate of yerne fast nayled on the keye holes, and my ij heirs and dawghters, that is to say Anne Bartillmew and Radegunde Dixe, to keep the keys of the coffer for their right and welth, and for the right of their ij herris of ther bodys lawfully begotten for ever. And for lack of right heirs of them, then to remain to Mr. John Millis of Southhampton, gentillman, and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, for the lands of Bicton and no more lands of myne. And I will and charge you, Mr. John Milles, before God, that

you bestow all the entrances of my lands in my name for me, my wiff, and all my heirs, one hundred marks of lawful money of England in almes dedes to be distributed to Priestes, Clerkes, and pore persons at Fordingbridge Church to pray for me and all myne and all Christian souls. This not done, I give all lands above specified to the kyng. Also I bequeath to my daughter Anne Bartillmew £6. 13*s*. 4*d*. on this condition, that the said Thomas Bartillmew, her husband, be sufficiently bound to Elizabeth, my wife, for the performance of a certain gift by me to my said wife, the date wheroff is the 25th day of Jan. in the 38 yr. of K. Henry the VIII [1546], before the said legacies be paid. Also I bequeath to William Bartillmew my godson my best dublett and 6*s*. 8*d*., and if the said William decease before me I will then and do bequeath the said legacy to John Bartillmew, the second son of Thomas Bartillmew. Also I bequeath to Thomas Dix my tawny gowne and jacket of black chamblett, and a doublett of crimson damask. Also I bequeath to my daughter Radegund Dix £3. 6*s*. 8*d*.. Item, I b. to Henry Dix 20*s*. to be applied to his behoof and use by my overseers till he come to the age of 16 years, and then to have it delivered. Also I b. to Jone Dix £3. 6*s*. 8*d*., to be reserved to her behoof by my overseers till she come to the age of 16 years.

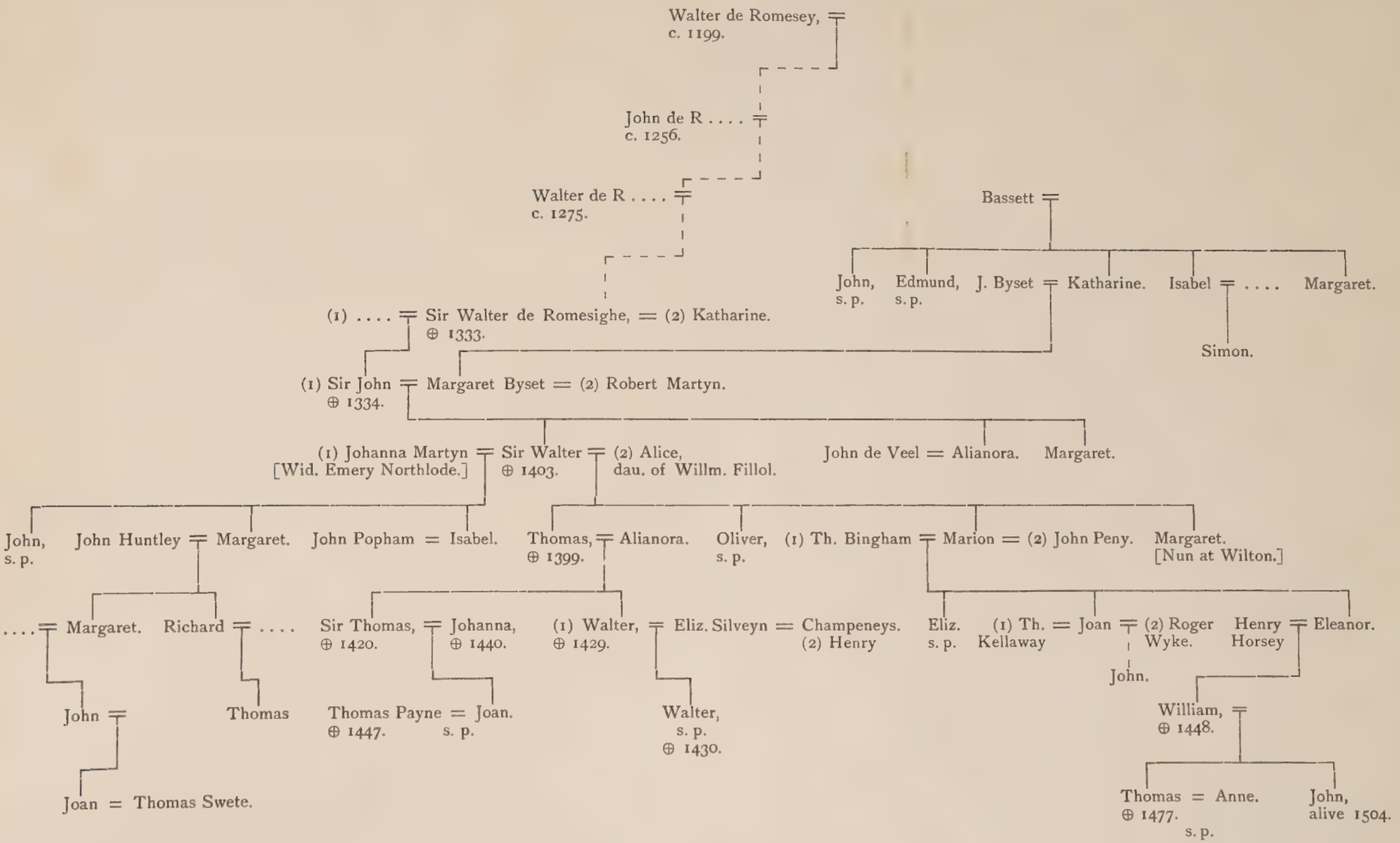
I bequeath to Thomas Bartillmew my best gown. Item, I bequeath to my sister Anne my black gown furred with cony and 40*s*. sterling. Item, I bequeath to Mr. Ockeden my best jacket of black damask. Also I bequeath to every of my god-children 4*d*. Also I bequeath to every of my servants 10*s*. if they please my wife. Also I bequeath to my wife Elizabeth for her anuite £8 sterling to be paid to her well and truly out of my lands in Bicton within the Churche of Fordingbridge at two usuall times in the year, that is to say at the feste of Thannuciation of the Blessed Lady Saynt Mary and S. Michal Tharchanngell, by even and equal parts, or within 14 days after every of the said festes duryng her naturall lyffe by the handes of Thomas Bartillmew or his heirs, according unto an indenture made betwixt me and the said Thomas berying date the last daye of June in the 38 year of K. H. VIII. Also I bequeath to Elizabeth my wife my hole

Lordship of Tayttisbery with all the implements of myne within the sayde Lordship according unto a certain indenture made for the behoffe and purpose beryng date the last day of April the year of the reynge of Edward the VI by the grace of God of E. F. and of Ir. king, defender of the faith, and in either of the Churches of England and also of Ir., imediatly under God supreme hede, the first. Also I will my game of swannes to remain to Elizabeth my wife during her lyffe, and att her decease at the marking time next after to remain to Anne Bartillmew and Radegund Dix, and to the heirs of their bodies lawfully begotten. Also I will Elizabeth my wife to be my hole executrix of all and every parcel of my goods moveable and unmoveable, these only excepted in this my present testament and last will otherwise appointed and bequeathed, and she to see my debts dewly payed and my burial and monthes mynde honestly performed, fulfilling this my last will and testament in all points, articles, and conditions.

Also I desire and pray to be my overseers Mr. John Milles, Mr. Charles Bulkeley the elder, Mr. John Ockeden, esquires, Sir William Grenewell, clerk, John Pokett, yoman, and Henry Crewse, Husbondman, to see all and everything as it is here written and expressed in this my testament and last will effectually performed, and no payment of this my last w. and t. to be deferred, diminished, or transposed so long as it stande with the law of God and the law of the realme. And my said supervisors over and above all the legacies to any of the afore bequeathed to have every of them for ther paynes, industry, and fidelity, if ther shall susteyn in this behalfe 6*s.* 8*d.*, deserying for all to be present at my funeral or monthes mynd. And to every of you also then ther present I give xij . . . . . praying you most tenderly to have in mynde these my poore requests, and to pray for me, as I shall (God willing) for you, if we maye come to the fruition of the godhed to which He of his infinite goodness and mere mercy bryng both you, me, and all Christens. In witness and veritie of all and singular the premisses I Wylleyam Rumsey, esquire, at Bicton before said, have subscribed my name the day and year above written, these being present: Henry Tripook, John Rede, and Ralf Wyng, all of Bicton.

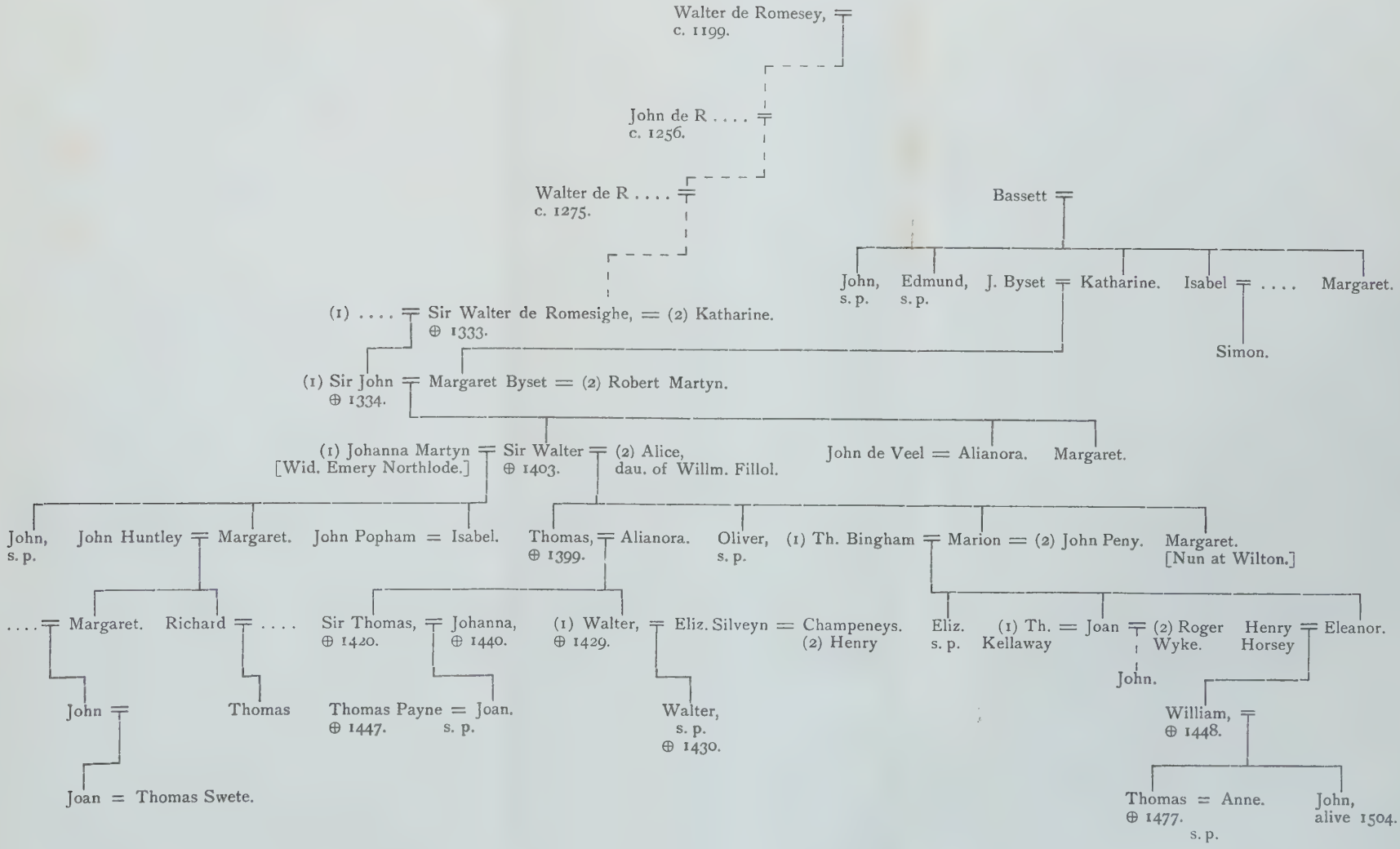
To follow page 320.]

PEDIGREE OF "DE ROMESEY."



To follow page 320.]

PEDIGREE OF "DE ROMESEY."



The Indenture of all and singular the goods and cattall of Mr. Wyllyam Rumsey, Esquyer, late dwelling in Bycton in the parish of Fordingbridge in the Diocese of Wynton, praysed and taken in the presence of Henry Tryppoche, John Rede, and Kevyn Hode, the 14th daye of Aug., the yere of our Lord God, 1549.

	£	s	d
In primis, 2 geldynge praysed	4	0	0
Item, 2 kyne praysed	0	30	0
„ in gold and silver of lawfel and curant money of England	41	0	0
„ a wood fende	0	20	0
„ a great brass pott and 3 lesser	0	10	0
„ 3 pannes and 2 haderyns	0	14	0
„ 2 fryin pannys, 2 gyrde irons, 2 brannde irons, and chaffer, and dryppyn panns, and ladell, and fleshe hooke, a fyer panne, and fyer pronge, and payre of tongys, a skymer, 7 brooches, 3 Anndyerns, and a chaffeyn dysh	0	21	4
„ Candellstycke	0	3	4
„ A 11 platerers, 8 poteyngers, sawsers, 5 potage dysses, a basin, 2 salte sellers, 3 pewter cuppes	0	20	0
„ 2 fether beddes and flocke bedde and a mattresse, and all thynges thereto belongyng	0	53	4
„ 3 borde clothes, 3 tuelles, and 15 naptkyns ...	0	16	0
„ Hys Apparell	13	6	8
„ 2 counter bordes and syde borde, 2 great chestes, 3 coffer box, and 2 chayers, with all the reste of wooden stuffe	0	31	0

This indenture taken at Tatysberye the daye and year above wrotte in the Diocese above said of the aforesaid William's goods by John Warwyoke, Roger Helyer, and Richard Cooke.

In primis a chamlett cassott, a dublett, and a worsted hatt	0	53	4
Item, a helyn, a carpett, and a peyre of blanchetts ...	0	20	0
„ a pair of shette, 2 table cloths, 2 towells, 2 curteyns, and 6 naptkys	0	20	0
„ a woode knyffe	0	3	4
„ a pewter vessell	0	13	4
„ a cheste	0	3	4
Sum total, £74. 8s.	£74	19	0

[But there seems to be a mistake of 11s.]

A.D., 1549, 19th September.

With the death of William, the male line of this branch ended, and the Rumseys disappear from this part of Hampshire. A branch, perhaps from Somerset, about the same time migrated into Wales, from which stock an extensive family of several branches issued, and many members of the family are to be found in different parts of the country. For the Welsh branch, Jones' *History of Brecknock* should be consulted.

APPENDICES.

A. Who was S. Æthelflæda?

B. Romsey Notes from Domesday.

C. Mr. John Latham and his Collections.

APPENDIX A

WHO WAS S. ÆTHELFLÆDA?

The Abbey of Romsey was at the first dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and at an early date the name of S. Æthelflæda, virgin and abbess, was united with that of the Blessed Virgin in the dedication, but a doubt has arisen as to the identity of this lady. There was an Ælflæda, daughter of Edward the Elder, dwelling here at the earliest period; she was buried at Romsey, and may have been the first abbess. Of this lady the *Liber de Hyda* says:—"Elfledam sanctam Deo dicatam, quæ apud Romeseyam requiescit." It may, however, be confidently asserted that this was not the lady whom the Abbey honoured as patron saint, and for these reasons:—

(1) The Romsey saint is *closely connected* with another abbess and saint of that house, S. Merwinna, to whom she was sent as a pupil by King Edgar after the death of Earl Ethelwold, her father. The life of this lady, transcribed from the very book in which the Romsey sisters, of the fourteenth century, used to read about her,[1] proves that this lady, and not Edward the Elder's daughter, was *then* honoured as patron saint.

(2) The Romsey Psalter of about the year 1441 *distinguishes* between these two ladies; for whereas the feast days of the patron saint are entered in the calendar thus:—

23rd October.—Sče Ethelflede vg̃is [red letter day].
27th January.—Translatio S. Ethelflede [black letter day].
10th March. —Revelacio S. Ethelflede [black letter day].

the feast of the daughter of Edward the Elder, whose name is entered amongst a list of obits by a later hand, is given on 6th March, and she is definitely identified by the description "sister of S. Edburga."

(3) The more ancient of the documents (*a*)—(*e*), quoted below, show the saint in close *connection with Merwinna*, and place her feast on 23rd October and not on 6th March. These documents also prove that 29th October and other dates which have been at one time or another assigned to her are erroneous.

[1] See Chapter II and pp. 289, 290.

(*a*) B. M. Stowe MS. 960, the Hyde Register, compiled *c.* 1016–25, gives amongst the names of illustrious women, p. 41 :—

Merþynn abbatissa Hrumesig cenobio (ninth on list).
Aðelflæd abbatissa Hrumesig cenobio (fourteenth on list).

(*b*) A Martyrology [C. C. C. Cambridge MS., No. 201, fol. 149, *d*], of a date before the Norman Conquest, contains this notice :—

"ðoñ resteð on rumesige sc̃a mærþyn þæs seo forme abbodesse þæs mynstreſ 7 sc̃e balthild regina 7 sc̃a æþelflæd 7 fela oðre halgan."[1]

(*c*) A Calendar [B. M., Titus D. xxvii] of the eleventh century, once owned by Abbott Aelfwine of Newminster, Winchester [1035–1057], has, in a contemporary though different handwriting from the rest of the book, this entry :—

"X Kal. Nov.[2] (d)epositio c̃a æthelflæde vir̃."

(*d*) A Calendar [B. M., Cotton Vit. E. xviii], of a date from *c.* 1031 to the close of the century :—

"X Kal. Nov. Athelflæde vir̃."

To this has been added and interlined above "Aelflede" in a handwriting of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

(*e*) A Martyrology [B. M., Reg. 2, A. xiii, fol. 42 *a*] of about the date 1220–24, according to Mr. Edmund Bishop, gives :—

"X Kal. Nov. In britãnia monast̃io Rĩnesie sc̃a a'lflede virg ʒ Abbatisse."

(*f*) B. M. Cotton Jul. B. vii, p. 48 *b*, under the date X Kal. Nov., gives curiously enough "ethelflede regīe"; but the MS. belongs to Norwich, and is of the fifteenth century.

(*g*) B. M. Cotton Tib. E. 1, known as John of Tynmouth's Sanctilogium [1360–70], gives the name "Elfleda vir. & Abb."

(*h*) B. M. Cotton Otho D. ix, or Capgrave's Nova Legenda [1464], based, it is said, on John of Tynmouth's work, adds her feast incorrectly "4 Kal. Nov.", *i.e.*, 29th October, and says that she flourished about 959, and seems therefore to refer to the daughter of Edward the Elder.

(*i*) Wilson [Martyrology,[3] B. M., Press Mark 1125, a. 14] gives 20th January in his earlier edition for the feast, and 29th October in his later, and makes matters more confused than Capgrave; but he improves on this writer by saying that she died 992, though he is probably some years too early.

[1] The text of this tract printed from all copies by *F. Liebermann*, under the title, "Die Heiligen Englands." And see Hicks' *Thesaurus*, Vol. III, p. 120.

[2] 23rd October.

[3] From Robert Buckland.

APPENDIX B.

Romsey Notes from Domesday.

REFERENCES.

Victorian County History.—Hants.

Wyndham, Wilts Domesday.

Jones, Wilts Domesday.

B.M. Add. MS. 31,923, p. 21, A Conspectus of King's Somborne Hundred.

Domesday Name of Estate	Saxon Ownership Time of King Edward the Confessor	Domesday Tenure and Sub-Tenure	Domesday T. R. E.[1] Hide	Virg.	Hides A.D. 1086 Hide	Virg.	Plough-lands	Ploughs there	Vill Bo Serv
	Domesday Hundred of Sumburne,. now dispersed among the sever								
Romseyg[2] ... [Romsey Infra and Extra]	Abbey of Ry.	Abbess of Ry.	14	0	10	0	18	18	94
		Hungerus ...	[1	1]	[1	1]	...	4	15
		Four free men	[1	3½]	[1	3½]			
		Abbess ...	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
							Domesday Hundred		
Dodintune[3] ... [Totton]	... ...	Abbess ...	1	0	...		3	3	15
							Domesday Hundred		
Sueia[4] ... ... [Sway]	... ...	Abbess ...	1	0	0	3	1	2	2
							Domesday Hundred		
Stoche ... ... [Itchen Stoke]	... ...	Abbess ...	8	0	6	0	6	10	18
							Domesday Hundred		
Sidemanestone [Sidmonton]	... ...	... ...	10	0	7½	0	11	11	29
							Domesday Hundred		
Edendone[5] ... [Edington, Wilts]	... ...	Abbess ...	30	0	...		35½	22	64
		William	15	3	4½	0	...	12½	...
		Osmund			4	0			
		Hervey			2	0			
		Some English			5	1			
Aistone[6] ... [Steeple Ashton, Wilts]	... ...	Abbess ...	40	0	...		37	29	78
		Edward ...	...		3	0	...	...	..
		William ...	...		1	0			
		Some English	...		4	0			

[1] T. R. E. means "time of King Edward."

[2] The Abbey holds the whole ville in which the Church is situate. In Winchester are XIV Burgesses, paying 25 shillings.

[3] A saltpan, worth 10 shillings.

Mills	Value of Mills	Acreage of Meadows	Swine	Woods and Pasture	Annual Values of Estates		
					T. R. E.	Interim	A.D. 1086
Hundreds of King's Somborne, Buddelsgate, Thorngate, and Wherwell.							
	£ s d				£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
	1 5 0	536	40	... ...	19 0 0	19 0 0	24 0 0
..	... ...	...	...	... ...			2 0 0
	0 10 0	...	...	... ...	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
odbridge, now Redbridge.							
	0 10 0	30	...	... ...	3 10 0	3 10 0	3 10 0
overe, now New Forest.							
.	... ...	1	...	... ...	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
Iantesberg, now Bountisborough.							
½	1 2 6	10	...	... ...	7 0 0	... ...	9 0 0
lere, now Kingsclere.							
.	... ..	4	5	... ...	7 0 0	8 0 0	10 0 0
Wharwellesdown, Wilts.							
	0 19 0	100	...	Pasture, 1½ miles by ¾ mile. Wood, 1¼ miles by 5 furlongs	... ...	... ...	30 0 0
.	... ...	...	...	... ...	... ...	... ...	18 0 0
	1 12 6	100	...	Pasture, 2 miles 3 fur. by 1 fur. Wood, 3 miles by ¾ mile	... ...	... ...	30 0 0
	... ...	...	...	... ...	... ...	... ...	6 13 0

[4] One virgate in the Forest.

[5] Those who held the 15 hides, T.R.E., could not be separated from the Church.

[6] Those who held T.R.E. could not be separated from the Church.

APPENDIX C.

MR. JOHN LATHAM AND HIS COLLECTIONS FOR A HISTORY OF ROMSEY.

Chiefly from the "Naturalist," Vol. IV, 1838–9.

There are, amongst the British Museum Additional MSS. [Nos. 26,774—26,780], seven quarto volumes which comprise a great variety of information relative to the local history of the Abbey, Town, and Neighbourhood of Romsey; these volumes are illustrated by numerous engravings, drawings, and plans, and are a witness to the immense diligence of Mr. John Latham who made these collections. At one time he intended to present them to the world, and was only deterred by the risk of publishing. The description of their acquisition by the B. M. is as follows:—"They were purchased by the Librarian at Putticks & Co., July 1866, having been sold at Evans' in Pall Mall, 22nd December, 1837, and bought by Rodd for £10. 15*s*."

The author of these collections was born at Eltham, in Kent, on 27th June 1740. He was the eldest son of John Latham, surgeon and apothecary of that place, who is said to have been descended from an ancient Lancashire family. At the age of six years he was sent to Merchant Taylors' School, and at fifteen he was prepared for his father's profession. He was married in 1763, and commenced business at Dartford.

At an early age he showed a love for natural history. There is a quaint oil painting of him, when ten years old, holding in his hand what looks like a wooden model of a bird. He published in 1821 his *General History of Birds*, and though he was then eighty-two years of age, he is described as retouching the copper plates with a steadiness of hand supposed to belong to the prime of life. The tools he used were, till lately, to be seen in a house in S. Thomas' Street, Winchester. His voluminous correspondence with eminent naturalists is referred to by his biographer, who adds: "That besides inspecting museums and making drawings of specimens, he etched every copper plate in his original work, stuffed and set up almost every animal in his extensive museum, and put together with his own hands a great many of the very cases in which they were deposited."

MR. LATHAM, AS A CHILD.

[From a painting.]

To face p. 330.]

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1775, and lived to be the "Father" or oldest member. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. In 1796 he retired from his profession, possessed of a handsome fortune, almost entirely realised during his practice of thirty-two years. He chose Romsey as his home, where his only surviving son was living, "whose immediate predecessors," it is added, "on the spot inhabited by him, turned an abbey into a brewery."

He married again in 1798, and spent at Romsey some twenty years in comfort, living in a house in Middlebridge Street, which was afterwards occupied by a Mr. Colcott. Then a series of unexpected calamities in his family not only caused him the severest distress of mind, but plunged him at eighty years of age into a state of almost utter destitution. Happily a home was found for him at the house of his son-in-law, Mr. W. N. Wickham, in S. Thomas' Street, and here he came in 1819, settling down by the aid of his placid disposition and real goodness of heart to his usual habits and pursuits.

In 1835 his daughter, Mrs. Wickham, died, and this year he felt for the first time the failure of his eyesight, but he walked out alone daily, scorning the support of anyone's arm. In 1836 Lord Palmerston paid him a visit, and describes him as "well, hearty, and cheerful, eating a good dinner at 5 p.m., but no longer able to see to read." He was then ninety-six years of age.

He passed away the year following. "His end was rapid, but not unexpected, and was caused not by disease but by exhaustion. The taper fairly burnt out. At the last he fell into a deep sleep of many hours duration, in which he expired without a pang on 4th February, 1837." His remains were deposited in the Abbey church. He is described as having a firm mouth, fine nose, with kindly eyes which twinkled, and a frank open face, surmounted by a wig. He was "one, not only of the most punctual of men of business, but of the most attentive to all the duties and courtesies of life."

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